

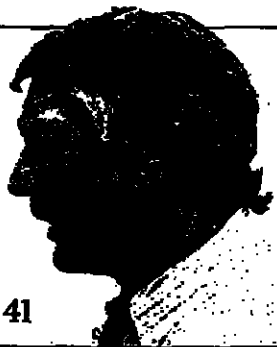
BEST FOR BOOKS

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STALLONE OUTGUNS DE NIRO

Geoff Brown
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New films, PAGE 41



TOMORROW:

WORLD CUP 98: THE DRAW

Full details
in Times Sport



UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT

ENGLAND EXPECTS

Prospects for
the opening
matches



BEST FOR JOBS

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Soups and stock cubes could be hit

Beef on bone banned over CJD fears

By Philip Webster and Robin Young

THE traditional roast rib of beef, T-bone steak and even Oxo gravy are set to disappear from British dining tables after the Government's surprise decision yesterday to ban the sale of beef on the bone because of a "very small" risk that it could cause Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.

The move dealt a fresh hammer blow to a farming industry that was slowly recovering from the "mad cow" disease crisis, and brought gloom to butchers, cooks and families looking forward to their big Christmas joint.

Announcing the decision in the Commons, the Agriculture Minister Jack Cunningham said that the ban was being imposed "on a strictly precautionary basis" after scientists advised that there was a very small chance that "mad cow" disease — or BSE — could be spread through bone or bone marrow. BSE has been linked to a new variant of the human disease CJD that has killed more than 20 people.

Dr Cunningham said: "This action will ensure that UK consumers continue to be given the highest protection possible against the risks from BSE." But industry leaders and some opposition MPs expressed anxiety that the ban could hit both public confidence in beef and British hopes of getting the EU's ban on beef exports lifted.

The decision means that all beef from cattle over six months old — whether from British or overseas farms — must be taken off the bone before it is sold to the consumer. The bones can be taken out in shops, catering establishments or other commercial premises, but must not be used in the preparation of food, sold or given away.

The ban could be in place within the week, but by yesterday lunchtime, supermarkets had withdrawn bone-in joints from their cabinets and the



Beefsteak chain had taken T-bone steaks off the menu. Restaurants, which use bones to make stock for all their soups, were confronting the problem of how they would now make classic dishes.

The effect of the ban will be not only to remove ribs, T-bone steaks, oxtails and even oxtail soups from the shelves, but also to restrict products based on meat extract and beef bone stock — including Bovril and Oxo cubes and tinned and packet soups.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food said: "If those products contain beef bones, British or imported, they will be affected."

Dr Cunningham made his announcement after receiving advice from the Government's Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (Seac), which calculated that six animals this year and three next — out of 2.2 million cattle slaughtered each year — could pose a risk.

The committee had suggested that the Government had three options: simply to release the information and let consumers decide for themselves; to ban the sale of beef on the bone from cattle over 24

months, or to ban the sale of all beef on the bone.

Dr Cunningham adopted the most draconian, and told MPs that he had acted "because it would not be acceptable to allow tissues shown to transmit BSE to remain within the human food chain."

He knew the move would be a disappointment to beef producers, but said he was acting "firmly and rapidly to protect consumer confidence, which is in the fundamental interests of the beef industry."

Tony Blair had earlier hinted that beef farmers would be compensated when he told the Commons: "We will, however, do everything we can to mitigate the problems they face."

The National Farmers' Union described the latest development as another body blow, but accepted that public health considerations had to be paramount. The president, Sir David Naish, said: "This ought to add to consumer confidence."

Michael Jack, the Shadow Agriculture Minister, also supported any moves to make British beef safer, but said that Dr Cunningham's announcement "will be of very great concern to the quality butchering trade."

Although less than 5 per cent of beef is sold on the bone, the proportion is much higher for sales from high quality butchers. The announcement comes just as they are preparing for their peak period and will disappoint many families planning to buy joints for Christmas.

Gordon Hepburn, chairman of the Guild of Q Butchers, said: "The timing of this is dreadful. We were just getting in ribs of beef and sirloins on the bone to have them nicely matured for Christmas. Now apparently they have put the nail in that."

Bone of contention, page 6



Woodward during the two-minute court hearing yesterday. The judge ruled that her case will be heard in March

Christmas hope for freed au pair

FROM TOM RHODES
IN CAMBRIDGE
MASSACHUSETTS

THE ORDEAL of her months in prison had clearly faded as a blossoming Louise Woodward walked from a Boston courtroom yesterday with a new spring in her step, her hair gleaming and the hope of spending Christmas at home in England.

Thinner than after her release from jail but no longer pallid from months of incarceration, prison food and little exercise, the au pair looked almost sultry as she entered the Supreme Judicial Court hearing. With her hair neatly

bobbed, large gold hoop earrings and a sober midnight blue velvet jacket, she created an image of a woman more mature than her 19 years.

Since she was released from Framingham Women's Prison last month, Miss Woodward has settled into a secluded but relaxed life in the Boston suburbs. Every morning she wakes late, according to friends, after going to bed in the early hours. She makes a daily pilgrimage to the offices of her legal team to read hundreds of supportive letters that continue to flood in from all parts of the globe.

In Marblehead, the suburb where she is staying with

Elaine Whitfield Sharp, one of her lawyers, Miss Woodward has adopted a singularly American routine to her newfound freedom. She regularly works out at a gym run by the Jewish community centre, visits shopping malls and goes to the cinema with a small coterie of new friends.

"She's doing fine," said Tim Hunt, a family friend. "The people of Marblehead appear to be very supportive, and she's living a fairly normal life for a 19-year-old. She has tried to make friends with young people." A particular friend, apparently, is the babysitter employed by Mr Hunt's daughter.

In a two-minute hearing yesterday, Justice Ruth Abrams referred all appeals in the case to a March sitting. Miss Woodward's lawyers said they would decide within days whether to seek court permission for her to return to the Cheshire village of Elton for Christmas.

Climate of change, page 22

Peps damage scaled down

THE £50,000 ceiling in the Government's new Individual Savings Account will hit between 350,000 and 450,000 Peps holders, a Downing Street spokesman claimed yesterday. At a briefing on Tuesday, the figure was put at 750,000. Page 27

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Smith moves quickly to calm Royal Opera storm

By Dalya Alberge and Philip Webster

THE Government yesterday granted a temporary reprieve to the embattled board of the Royal Opera House, which had been told to resign by an all-party committee of MPs.

Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, sent a swift letter to Gerald Kaufman, chairman of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee, agreeing with its finding that "substantial changes" must now come but giving a warning that an immediate purge could only worsen the crisis.

The report by the committee of 11 called on Mr Smith to insist on the management's departure. Mr Kaufman went as far as recommending that the opera house's £15 million annual grant from the Arts Council be withdrawn if they did not take the hint to go. An administrator, he said, should take their place until the ROH returns to its redevelped Covent Garden site.

Mr Smith broke with precedent in making such a quick response; the Government is allowed up to two months to reply to a select committee report. Sources say that the letter was designed to avoid a panic reaction if the board had taken the committee's advice and gone overnight.

Mr Smith is to meet Lord Chadlington, the opera house

chairman, and Lord Gower, head of the Arts Council, today.

Members of the committee had been so appalled by the management's incompetence in handling tax-payers' money that they were adamant that Mary Allen, along with Lord Chadlington and the rest of the board, should go as soon as possible. "We would prefer to see the House run by a phillistine with the requisite financial acumen than by the succession of opera and ballet lovers who have brought a great and valuable institution to its knees."

Miss Allen, the chief executive of the opera house, yesterday rejected the severe criticisms of her conduct. In a



Smith: swift reply to call for resignations

statement Miss Allen, who has been in the post for only three months, says: "My objective is to work in the best interests of the Royal Opera House and this I shall continue to do."

Michael Fabricant, a member of the committee, welcomed Mr Smith's letter for appearing to have ruled out the status quo: "If it was an option before, then it ain't an option now. There must be change." He spoke of how they had been astounded by the lack of available financial information and appalled by "abysmal failures" of planning.

One board member, Michael Berkeley, insisted he was happy about the artistic achievements of the board, saying it would be "criminal" if Miss Allen were forced out. "There have been extremely difficult financial circumstances and a month ago we offered our resignations. But many people, not only inside Covent Garden but also outside, said 'Please stay' and it is right because we do have a legal and moral obligation to look after the welfare of the company," he told BBC Radio 4's *World at One*.

MPs' report, pages 10 and 11
William Rees-Mogg, page 22
Leading article, page 23

GPs win control of NHS budget

By Jill Sherman, Chief Political Correspondent

THE NHS drugs bill will be capped and most of the £35 billion health budget transferred into the hands of family doctors under the Government's long awaited shake-up of the health service to be unveiled next week.

A White Paper, which will abolish the NHS internal market, will also propose a cash limit on a drugs budget which has risen by more than 300 per cent in ten years.

The plans, which will be announced by Tony Blair and Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, next Tuesday, are much more radical than those outlined in Labour's manifesto. Under the proposals, Britain's 35,000 GPs will be responsible for buying most hospital and community care for their patients, including emergency services.

Health authorities, which now allocate most of the funds, will retain only a small sum to spend on specialist services, such as heart, lung and kidney transplants and specialist paediatric services.

It is understood that up to 80 or 90 per cent of the total budget for buying NHS treatment will be given to groups of GP practices. This will give GPs the scope to decide whether their patients are best treated in hospital or at home and to juggle budgets accord-

ingly. The GP "collectives" will vary in size, covering about 100,000 patients and could comprise from four to six GP practices or up to 50 family doctors. They will gradually take over the role of health authorities, which are expected to be reduced in number and to a supervisory role. The collectives will instead take charge of buying care from NHS trusts and community services through three-year rolling contracts.

Ministers intend to guard against accusations that they have kept the framework of the internal market or that a two-tier service could still emerge by insisting on a legally binding local health strategy.

NHS trusts, health authorities, GPs and social services will all be legally required to sign up to a three-year strategy, agreed by all parties. The aim is to stop NHS trusts competing by setting up duplicate services.

Labour is committed to phasing out GP fundholders, who now hold limited budgets for some hospital care, and cover 50 per cent of the population. But the Government has effectively extended the principle nationwide, although the budget would be held by the collective rather than the individual practice.

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Liberals go in for a penny, but come out with a pounding

Risking rebuttal, this sketch asserts that yesterday and for the first time, a British Prime Minister said "pee" at the Commons dispatch box.

Or as good as did. Tony Blair is quickly irritated by what he regards as bleeding heart Liberal Democrats and the cause of his annoyance yesterday was the likeable Dr Jenny Tonge (Lib-Dem, Richmond Park). Dr Tonge had got off to a bad start by forgetting to put her Question. After being prompted she covered her face in shame.

then lay her head fetchingly on Paul Tyler's neck, starting the Liberal Democrat's wispy Agriculture Spokesman.

But Tonge recovered, accusing the Government of robbing the weak by pushing up council tax. This riled Blair, losing control of his "T's" ("benefit", "profit" and "Conservative" become "benefit", "profit" and "Conservative") he hurled figures at the House.

This was always Margaret Thatcher's reflex. The resemblance is uncanny. Both react to a challenge not by engaging

with the argument but by reaching for the nearest heap of statistics (a Prime Minister's equivalent of a pile of rocks) and throwing them at the head of the questioner.

That is the first part. The second — the swift kick in the shins — is an insult of a personal or *ad hominem* nature, along the lines of "and that's pretty rich coming from the likes of you whose own habits/beliefs/record hardly stand scrutiny... [give examples *ad lib*]"

Margaret Thatcher's shinkicks typically related to the



socialist beliefs of her challenger. Tony Blair gets personal or (where Tories are involved) attacks the record of the last Government. ("His was a government which...")

But the only big difference between the two is that this was Thatcher's sole mode of operation (even allies were pelted with facts) whereas Blair has two. He can change

abruptly into caring-giving mode.

But not for Jenny Tonge, who now received the shinkick. The trouble with the Liberals, snapped Blair, was that they love to call for spending on this, spending on that, spending on the other — and then claim it would "all come out of one penny on income tax? It must be the

longest p in history."

MPs fell about. Opinion is divided as to whether the Prime Minister had stooped to conquer, but conquer he did. I thought it a good joke. We shall look with interest at how the *Official Report* records the p.p. "p". P or pee.

Mr Blair has a unique way of ending his ripostes. The final sentence is delivered with a showmanlike flourish — an unspoken boom-boom — as though inviting his audience to see it as a memorable one-liner. The p-word did deserve its boom-boom.

but "... and he thinks he can have his cake and eat it" and "... benefit the many not the few" hardly did. Having delivered these crackers he sits back with a triumphant smile.

Questioning Mr Blair, William Hague sounded as though he had a hangover and lacked his habitual crispness. The Tory leader tried to bundle together accusations about the financial affairs of the Paymaster General, Geoffrey Robinson, and protests about threats to savings. Blair failed to answer Hague's questions, but escaped. He

seemed, however, in ratty mood. We suspected this when a "yknow", a "look", and a "the plain fact of the matter is" crept in. Suspicions were confirmed when, answering Hague, he said "... the four and a half million people — right? — with the £9,000 limit — right? — can now..."

Right?

□ Stop Press: as I write, a Labour MP, Stephen Pound (Ealing N) is on my screen, making a Commons speech in a dinner jacket. Times change.

Boom economy fuels giveaway budget for Irish

By Audrey Magee, Ireland Correspondent

IRISH taxpayers and social welfare recipients are to benefit from the largest giveaway budget ever announced in Ireland.

The continued success of the Irish economy allowed Charlie McCreevy, the finance minister, to yesterday divide surplus cash between workers, the elderly, the disabled and the health care system. He cut income tax, corporation tax and even increased payments to the parents of twins.

Mr McCreevy, who was announcing the first budget since the centre-right Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat government took office in June, had a 1997 surplus of £225 million to play with in drawing up his budget.

He announced £570 million in tax and social insurance cuts. He slashed the two income tax rates by 2 per cent to 46 and 24 per cent and extended annual personal allowances by £250 for a single person and £500 for a married couple. He cut corporation tax in half to 20 per cent. Mr McCreevy said that the government aimed to cut income tax to 20 per cent.

The tax cuts were essential for the credibility of the Progressive Democrats, the minority coalition partner which promised substantial tax cuts

in the June election. Mary Harney, the party leader, has been dogged by allegations that she was being subsidised by Fianna Fail policies and needed to reassert her party's policies in the budget.

Opposition parties and anti-poverty organisations wanted the government to increase the threshold for tax payment to benefit the lower paid. At present, Irish workers pay 48 per cent tax on about £12,000, depending on allowances and marital status.

John Fitzgerald, economist with the Economic and Social Research Institute, the economic think-tank, said it was folly to release more funds into an already buoyant economy. He said: "Logic tells you that you do not put money into an economy that is booming. The money should be used to repay our national debt not fritter away on tax cuts."

Mr McCreevy announced a £5 increase in the weekly old age pension, bringing it to almost £140 for a married couple; healthcare will receive a £36.8 million increase in 1998 bringing its budget to £3.1 billion, while the Gaelic Athletic Association will receive £20 million from the government over the next three years. Unemployed people who decide to go back

to work will be given £3,000 by the government. The government will seek to earn by a little money by placing 10p on 20 cigarettes and 4p on a litre of unleaded petrol.

Michael Noonan, the Fine Gael opposition spokesman, accused Mr McCreevy of risking the stability of the economy. "This budget is studded with a series of short-term expedient measures at the expense of medium and long term strategies. It dispenses money with all the efficacy of a scatter-gun," he said.

Ireland, the once-improvised island on the corner of Europe, is awash with millionaires, Porsches and mobile phones but economists are at a loss to fully explain how it happened, putting it down to fiscal management, education and a dose of good luck.

For the last four years, the economy has been growing at a rate of 7.5 per cent with employment increasing by four per cent. Inflation is down to two per cent.

The seeds of the success were laid in the 1980s when government, trade unions and business drew up successive wage agreements: the unions would not seek pay increases if the government reduced taxes. Yesterday marked the first big pay-back.



A Gurkha stands guard by the first memorial in Britain to the Gurkhas after it was unveiled by the Queen outside the Ministry of Defence yesterday. A public appeal raised more than £250,000 for the 9ft bronze statue on a 10ft plinth

Bombers transferred

Men jailed for bombing Harrods and the Warrington gasworks have been transferred to an Irish prison in an effort to boost the Northern Ireland peace process. Patrick Hayes and Dennis Kinsella were removed from the high-security Full Sutton prison near York and taken by helicopter to Portlaoise prison, Co Laois. Vincent Wood, who was jailed for possession of Semtex, was also transferred. Inmates at Portlaoise, Ireland's main IRA prison, waved flags from windows as the men arrived.

Hayes was sentenced to a 30-year jail term in 1994 for planting a bomb outside Harrods in London. Kinsella was jailed for 25 years for leaving explosives at a gasworks in Warrington and Wood was given a 17-year sentence for possessing 35lbs of Semtex.

Inmates given no work

Three quarters of the inmates at Pentonville prison in London are spending only nine hours a week out of their cells because there is nothing for them to do. A team working for the Chief Inspector of Prisons found during a visit that 707 of the 942 men had no work or education courses. The Prison Service blamed inadequate funding.

Virgin trains rebuked

Railway regulators have rebuked Richard Branson's Virgin trains company for offering a poor service and told managers to make improvements. Punctuality on the company's West Coast main line was nowhere near reaching the target set when it won the franchise to run the Glasgow-London service, the Commons Transport Select Committee was told.

Smear blunders revealed

A chance finding that a laboratory technician doing cervical smear screening made one mistake has led to the discovery that she also missed abnormalities on 71 of the 3,930 other slides she examined over a two year period. Six of the women concerned have now been invited by Berkshire Health Authority to have a coloscopy.

Rover's smell of success

In an elegant restaurant in Bologna, Sophia Loren introduced a new fragrance to the world. Called Essenziale by Rover, the carmaker's unisex perfume is billed as "vital as music, overdefined, and eternal as its floral bouquet... a well defined personality which completely reflects the spirit of tradition and innovation at Rover".

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Blair means business on global warming

By Philip Webster
POLITICAL EDITOR

TONY BLAIR will today call on business leaders to join the crusade to tackle global warming or risk leaving a "dreadful legacy" for future generations.

The Prime Minister gives a warning in *The Times* that unless business plays its part the targets signed up to at this

month's world climate conference in Kyoto, Japan, will be meaningless and empty. He has called senior industrialists to a "green summit" in Downing Street today which will hear from a government expert committee that global warming could lead to massive flooding in parts of eastern and southern England. Mr Blair writes that the great storm of 1990 cost the economy £3 billion. "That is nothing

compared to what could happen if we allow global warming to go unchecked."

Today's gathering will include scientists, leading trade unionists and leading businessmen including Sir Colin Marshall of the CBI, and the heads of BP, Shell, National Power, Rover and ICI.

Global warming, page 8
Tony Blair, page 2

Blair's U-turn on coal

Continued from page 1

inquiry into the coal industry. When he appeared, Mr Blair underlined the depth of the change in government thinking when he said that the growing dependence on gas raised questions about Britain's ability to generate enough electricity in the future to "keep the lights on".

He told the committee: "Recent inquiries that I have made have raised serious new concerns on security and diversity of energy supplies. Views have been put to me recently from various quarters that the increasing dependence on gas in power generation raises issues concerning the security of supply of our electricity system."

Mr Blair said that he had decided to act after the National Grid raised concerns with him about the grid's growing dependence on gas. But the announcement directly contradicted evidence given to the committee by Mr Blair's Department of Trade and Industry, which had said that it would look at gas-fired stations on a case by case basis. Mr Blair said afterwards that he had received a letter from the National Grid only on Tuesday night.

There were indications that yesterday's change of heart was rushed together by senior ministers over the previous 24 hours to avoid an embarrassing confrontation with the miners and a growing number of backbenchers in mining constituencies. Peter Mandelson, the Minister without Portfolio, called in Jonathan Powell, the Prime Minister's chief of staff, last week to draw up a rescue plan after a tense Commons debate on coal.

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Man cuts up rough after wife's affair

By PHILIP DELVES
Broughton

A MAN who suspected his wife of having an affair took revenge with a play previously adopted by scorned women—he cut up all her clothes with a pair of scissors.

Alan Schubert, 43, destroyed more than £4,000 worth of jumpers, dresses, skirts and trousers before neatly folding them up and putting them away again. Susan Lawrence, 44, his common-law wife and manager of a clothes shop, was left without a stitch apart from those she stood up in.

Mr Schubert explained to magistrates in Norwich on Tuesday: "I did not use violence. I did not smash up the house. I did not throw bricks through the window like other people have done. That was the only way I could get back at her for hurting me."

Ms Lawrence left the home they shared in Norwich on October 31 and went to live with her sister. The couple had no children.

Mr Schubert told the court



Schubert: cut up all his wife's clothes in revenge

that before she left him, his wife regularly went to visit a female friend in the city. These visits had become increasingly frequent, until one morning, he went to pick up his wife, to save her catching the bus home, only to find that she had spent the night with another man.

A week later, Ms Lawrence left Mr Schubert, taking nothing with her. Prompted by a male friend, Mr Schubert took out his scissors.

He said: "I did what I did

because I was emotionally disturbed after finding out she had been seeing someone else. The only way I could hurt her was to cut up her clothes because her life is her clothes. I did not know she had £4,000 worth of clothes."

Mr Schubert told the court that his wife often received free designer clothes, including jumpers worth £70. He pleaded guilty to destroying clothing worth £3,962 belonging to Mrs Lawrence and was ordered to pay her £200 in compensation, but received no further penalty for criminal damage. Norwich Union, the insurance company, had already made a £2,000 contribution for replacement clothes for Mrs Lawrence.

Mr Schubert said: "I do regret it because it was hard for her not to have any clothes. But like I said to her, all she's lost is her clothes. I've lost my home and my dignity. She's still got her home, her job, her friends and a boyfriend. I've lost everything, but she's done rather well out of it."

Mr Schubert said that his wife's new boyfriend was a 36-year-old local builder. "She claimed he was just a friend, but he's moved into the house I used to live in. He used to live at home with his mum and dad until he met Susan. She says she enjoys his company, but she's done this before, moving one man out and another one in, she did it with me," said Mr Schubert.

"She'd hurt me and I got angry. You can imagine how I'm feeling—I'm in love with her and she wants to be with someone else."

Mr Schubert, who is now staying with friends near his old home in Norwich, apologised to magistrates for his slashing spree, said that his partner had now forgiven him for what he did to her clothes and added that he was hoping for a reconciliation.

Ms Lawrence is not so sure. Yesterday, she said: "I have got someone else now who is a friend who helped me through. I am not going back." She also has a new wardrobe.



Susan Lawrence: clothes worth £4,000 were destroyed



Lieutenant-Commander Spiller, principal warfare officer of HMS Sheffield

Woman beats men to key battle post on warship

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A WOMAN has beaten male rivals to one of the key jobs on a Royal Navy warship. Lieutenant-Commander Vanessa Spiller, 33, has been appointed a principal warfare officer. She would be responsible for helping to direct offensive operations in a war.

Commander Spiller is among a small group of women working their way up the promotion ladder who could be commanding a ship within the next year or so.

Her new appointment is on HMS Sheffield, a Type 22

frigate. The first woman commanding officer is likely to be put in charge of a mine counter-measure vessel or a university cadet training ship.

Commander Spiller, who is married to a naval officer of the same rank, joined the Navy as a Wren radio operator in 1983 and has served on three other warships.

Admiral Sir John Brigstocke, Second Sea Lord and the Navy's Principal Personnel Officer, said: "Her deserved selection has been entirely by merit and was in

direct competition with other officers of the same background and specialisation."

John Reid, the Armed Forces Minister, said the appointment reflected the Navy's commitment to the full integration of women in the service and to equal opportunities.

As principal warfare officer on HMS Sheffield, Commander Spiller will assist the commanding officer in carrying out fighting operations, selecting and attacking targets and authorising defensive manoeuvres.

RAC says sorry to mother who had to walk

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE RAC has apologised after refusing to help a mother and her baby when their car broke down because she had already called for assistance six times this year.

Julie Raw had to carry her nine-month-old daughter Krista home in the rain when the organisation told her she had used up her annual allowance of free help. Even when she offered £49 in cash to cover their call-out charge she was turned down.

Mrs Raw said: "I could have been stranded miles from anywhere with my young daughter and they wouldn't have come out and helped me. It was absolutely bucketing down with rain."

"I couldn't believe the attitude of the RAC. They just didn't seem bothered at all about my problems."

She had called for help when her car cut out half a mile from her home at Hetton, near Sunderland, as she was on her way to collect her older daughter Jade, six, from a birthday party.

She had to walk home as darkness fell and make emergency arrangements for a friend to collect Jade. When she returned to her abandoned car later she found thieves had stolen part of her CD player because the breakdown had affected the central locking. The car was eventually towed home by her husband Robert, 36.

The couple have been RAC members for four years. This year they have called the service six times but this incident was the first involving her Escort. Yesterday Peter Brill of the RAC apologised and said they would compensate her for the distress she suffered.

He said: "The Raws were subject to our 'fair call' policy. There is a limit to the number of calls we will attend before we levy a penalty to attend more breakdowns in that year. We introduced that to prevent it being used as a garage maintenance company and not a rescue service."

Patrols are told not to accept cash to avoid carrying large sums of money.



E.H. Shepard's Pooh Christmas card

Drawing of Pooh to make £75,000

By JOHN VINCENT

E.H. SHEPARD's original drawing for a privately printed Christmas card featuring his most famous character—Winnie the Pooh—is set to fetch up to £75,000 at Christie's in New York tomorrow. The card, bearing the legend "Christmas Greetings From Norah & Ernest Shepard", depicts Pooh trudging through snowy woodland with two other favourites from A.A. Milne's children's books.

Eyore has a mouthful of holly, Pooh clutches a large jar of honey and Piglet carries a huge Christmas cracker over his shoulder.

Francis Wahlgren, head of Christie's International book department, said yesterday that he believed the scene was Shepard's own version of the three Magi bearing gifts for the baby Jesus. The original artwork is being sold together with one of the 200 cards which Shepard and his wife Norah sent from their home at Long Meadow, Guildford, in the 1940s.

By coincidence, at Christie's in South Kensington on December 12, a Happy New Year card sent by Shepard to an art student friend is estimated to fetch up to £10,000. It shows a replete Pooh sitting with Piglet beside an empty plate and forms part of a collection. The highlight is an illustration for *The House at Pooh Corner* showing Pooh and Piglet atop a gate reciting the verse *The more it snows*.

Newspaper pays out over Hurley allegation

LIZ HURLEY yesterday accepted substantial undisclosed libel damages over an allegation that she was prepared to make herself available at the home of any man who fancied her for a fee of £12,000.

The 32-year-old actress and model was not at the High Court to hear lawyers for *The Mirror* offer its sincere apologies for the June 1996 article.

Keith Schilling, for Miss Hurley, said the article, which concluded with a "grossly offensive" comparison between Miss Hurley and the prostitute Divine Brown, was highly defamatory and had caused great distress and embarrassment. He said that the newspaper aggravated the injury to Miss Hurley's feelings by failing to offer to apologise until the trial of the libel action was only three weeks away.

Marcus Partington, for MGN Ltd, said the item was intended to be light-hearted. MGN accepted that the allegations were without foundation and ought never to have been published, and had agreed to pay substantial damages and Miss Hurley's reasonable legal costs.

Animal charities stop supplying dogs to police

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

TWO national animal welfare groups yesterday stopped supplying dogs to police forces while police investigate allegations that a dog died after being deliberately kicked during a training exercise.

The RSPCA and the National Canine Defence League announced that they would halt supplying rescued animals for training as police dogs. The RSPCA said it may also bring a charge of animal cruelty against Essex Police at the end of the investigation. The moves follow the death of Acer, a German shepherd dog, which collapsed and died on November 20 while on a week-long refresher course at Sandon near Chelmsford. A post-mortem examination showed that it died from a haemorrhage caused by a ruptured liver.

It has been alleged that PC Mark Needham, Acer's handler, was ordered to kick the dog as part of the training. At the time the dog-handling section was under investigation after a complaint by

Man fined £3,000 for smashing pet's jaw

A RETIRED RAF squadron leader has been fined £3,000 for smashing the jaw of his elderly Jack Russell terrier.

Dennis Warne, 71, was also banned for life from keeping animals and told to pay £775 costs by magistrates in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

After the hearing, Simon Parker, an RSPCA inspector, said he believed the fine was the highest imposed for a cruelty offence. The injuries to the dog's jaw, which had fractures in eight places, were "the worst I've ever seen". Warne admitted causing unnecessary suffering earlier this year to his 13-year-old dog, called Jack, which is now recovering in RSPCA kennels. He attacked the terrier in his garden with a long-handled tool he used to cut his hedge.

The injured dog was found near to collapse. Passers-by alerted police.

Warne, of Melton Mowbray, apologised to the court and said he was shocked at the injuries he had caused. He explained that he had lashed out in anger with the first object that came to hand after the dog had twice bitten him.

Gorbachev enjoys slice of success

By CAROL MIDDLEY
Media Correspondent

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV is to follow Pamela Anderson and Damon Hill by singing the praises of the pizza. He has accepted more than £100,000 to star in Pizza Hut's latest television advertising campaign, which he has just finished filming in Moscow.

According to Pizza Hut, the former Soviet leader has said that he intends to use the fee to help to establish a permanent home for his Perestroika library and museum in Moscow. Mr Gorbachev, whose nine-year-old granddaughter Anastasia was present during filming at a central Moscow restaurant in central Moscow, joins a select clique of celebrities who have appeared in the commercials. However, he



Pizza types: Mikhail Gorbachev and Pamela Anderson

may have cause to regret his decision.

Recent storylines have included the England footballer Gareth Southgate wearing a brown paper bag on his head because of his humiliation in missing a crucial penalty

against Germany during the Euro 96 semi-final, and the television presenter Jonathan Ross being ravished by the model Caprice because she is aroused by men who cannot pronounce the letter R. It is understood that initial

script ideas, since rejected, involved jokes about the birthmark on Mr Gorbachev's head.

Gary Haigh, marketing director of Pizza Hut UK, said: "The storyline is a closely guarded secret although its light-hearted nature will be in line with the flavour of our previous commercials. We are delighted he has agreed to appear."

Mr Gorbachev is no stranger to the delights of Western food. Last year he was photographed with his wife, Raisa, enjoying a ploughman's lunch in a home counties pub.

Next week Pizza Hut will launch a campaign featuring the manager of Chelsea Football Club, Ruud Gullit. Mr Gorbachev's commercial will not be screened until the new year.



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Royal lawyers try to block Princess 'love story' film

Former Sun editor plans to focus on affair with Dodi Fayed, reports Daniel McGrory

LAWYERS acting for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund are trying to prevent Kelvin MacKenzie, a former Editor of *The Sun*, from making a film about her. They last night described his plans to focus on the late Princess's friendship with Dodi Fayed as "inappropriate and insensitive".

Mr MacKenzie, who is managing director of LIVE TV, described the lawyers' remarks as "outrageous censorship". He insisted that the film — to be called *People's Princess* — will be made early next year and shown in Britain in April.

"It was my idea. The public want

to know about the most famous woman ever to walk God's earth and how her attempts to find true love were cruelly snatched from her. I object to a bunch of busybodies telling me what I can watch. If we have to we will make this film in Turkey or wherever. This is a love story and they won't stop us."

Lawyers from Miscon de Reya, who handled the Princess's divorce and who act for the fund, are appalled that the final scene will be of a black Mercedes entering the

underpass in Paris where the Princess died. Their efforts to block the film comes as they are trying to protect her image financially to stop "unscrupulous profiteering". They are also seeking to copyright the words "Diana, Princess of Wales".

A letter sent to the film producers says: "No one has sought permission from Kensington Palace, the Spencer family or ourselves for the production of this film."

"You will appreciate that a film like this, produced so soon after the

untimely death of both the Princess and Dodi Fayed, is entirely inappropriate and insensitive not only to their memories but also to their families. In any event, you may not be aware of the numerous complex legal issues involved."

Mr MacKenzie said the £1.5 million film would almost certainly lose money. "But LIVE TV doesn't care about that. We believe this should be made. I am sick of seeing people like John Major and others telling everyone what we can and can't say

and do about the Princess." His television company is famous for featuring topless darts, the "News Bunny" commenting on the day's events and a scantily dressed woman giving the weather forecast in Norwegian.

The film will be produced in association with Artemis Films, which was involved in the controversial CBS production, *Princess in Love*, last year. The script concentrates on the Princess's search for personal happiness after the break-

up of her marriage, and her fulfilment in her public role as the "queen of people's hearts", despite harassment by the paparazzi.

Mr MacKenzie said the plan was for an unknown actress to play the Princess and "a lookalike" to play Dodi, son of Mohamed Al Fayed.

Miscon de Reya said last night that the film's producers risked being sued. "We anticipate the film will be based on fact and presumed fact," a spokesman said. "So far as the film represents events which are not factual the producers of the film will lay themselves open to action from the estate and memorial fund."

Brother to play lead role in tribute to Diana

By Daniel McGrory

EARL SPENCER will play a decisive part in deciding the nation's memorial to his sister, Diana, Princess of Wales, even though he has refused to join the official committee.

On the day his divorce was granted the earl was invited by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, to sit in on meetings of the Memorial Committee.

Lord Spencer declined to be part of the ten-strong committee, saying he would be spending too much time in South Africa and preparing his Althorp estate for its summer opening to the public.

His reluctance did not stop Mr Brown inviting him to help to decide which of the 7,000 suggestions received should be paid for by the Government as a fitting lasting tribute to the Princess.

Ministers did not wish to alienate Lord Spencer despite his tribulations in the Cape Town divorce courts. A spokesman for Lord Spencer said he was happy to be involved.

The Chancellor, who will head the committee, yesterday named its other members. They include Paul Burrell, the Princess's trusted butler; Rosa Monckton, her close friend; Anthony Julius, the solicitor who handled her divorce; Lord Attenborough, the film-maker; Baroness Chalker of Wallasey, the former Overseas Development Minister; Lord Airlie, the Lord Chamberlain, who represents the Royal Household; Jane Tewson, the Comic Relief co-founder, and Diane Louise Jordan, a former *Blue Peter* presenter.

The committee will be assisted by an advisory group of representatives from all the main political parties and by a further group drawn from the charities that the Princess supported.

Six minutes that sealed Spencers' fate

FROM JOANNA BALE IN CAPE TOWN

THE marriage of Earl Spencer and his wife was ended in just six minutes in a South African courtroom yesterday.

After five days of acrimony and lurid headlines, the earl went into the witness box for the first time and told Judge Ian Farlam that his eight-year marriage had broken down and that there was no hope of a reconciliation. The judge granted a divorce decree that included a settlement of £1.8 million for Countess Spencer, who was not in court.

Judge Farlam began by congratulating both parties on reaching a settlement. He said: "It was the sort of matter that should have been settled and I am pleased to see a

positive decision." After giving his full name and swearing the oath with his hand raised, the earl confirmed the date of his marriage to Countess Spencer, which had followed a six-week courtship. Repeatedly addressing the judge as "my lord", he then confirmed his residency in Cape Town for the past two years, and the names and dates of birth of his four children. He also told the court that he and Countess Spencer had been separated for three years.

Asked: "Do you think there is any hope of a reconciliation?", the earl replied: "There isn't, my lord."

Asked: "Are you satisfied that this marriage has

irretrievably broken down?" he replied: "It is so, my lord."

The judge then asked about the arrangements made for joint custody of the children and an agreement that the earl pay £4,375 per child a year, plus school, nanny and private medical insurance fees.

He said: "Are you satisfied that arrangements made relating to the children as set down are in the interests of the children?" He replied: "They are in their interests, sir."

The earl, who had previously submitted a witness statement saying that he did not regard his wife as a fit mother, was then asked whether he thought the children were "adequately cared for" when with her. He hesitated momentarily, then answered: "Yes, my lord."

After leaving the witness box, the earl smiled and kissed a female barrister in his legal team, then patted his lawyer, Leslie Weinkove, on the shoulder, joking: "I won't kiss you." He also thanked the court staff, then left the building declining to comment to dozens of journalists who followed him down the street to Mr Weinkove's chambers.

The nine-page deed of settlement, which is now a public document, gives Countess Spencer a £1.8 million lump sum, with the earl allowed two months in which to pay. A



Earl Spencer leaving court yesterday with members of his legal team. His marriage was ended in six minutes



The girlfriend, Josie Borain, left, and Countess Spencer

banker's guarantee, given in lieu, held up the proceedings for five hours yesterday when it was discovered that it had been wrongly worded.

Countess Spencer is also given her Cape Town home, valued at £250,000, its contents and an Isuzu car. However, the deed revealed that she will have to pay her own legal costs, estimated at £250,000. As part of the agreement, the countess will no longer benefit from any of the Spencer family trusts.

Her ex-husband must pay her £4,375 per child per year with the proviso that she can

go to court to ask for an increase if it is required. He must also pay for a nanny and private medical insurance while the children are in full-time education. The deed also states that they agree to bring up the children in the Anglican faith.

The children will continue to spend weekdays with their mother and weekends with their father. The deed states: "The parties shall endeavour to reach agreement in a spirit of co-operation and reasonableness in relation to the carrying out of the present arrangements, and any

changes thereto which future circumstances may require."

There was also provision for Countess Spencer to arrange for her jewellery and possessions to be collected from the earl's homes in Althorp, Northamptonshire, and Spencer House, London, within six months. The earl and countess also agreed not to give interviews to the media or to publishers about their married life or the private lives of any relation, alive or dead.

They have also agreed not to talk about the divorce proceedings or the settlement. Countess Spencer's barrister, Jeremy Gauntlett, said last night that his client was extremely pleased at the settlement. "How this couple ever got together I will never know," he said.

On the eve of the divorce, the earl and his girlfriend, Josie Borain, 34, a former model turned freelance fashion consultant, celebrated together in Cape Town at a fashion awards ceremony, sponsored by a whisky company in aid of the Red Cross.

They were pictured at the event on the front page of the Afrikaans newspaper, *Die Burger*, yesterday.

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Restaurants and butchers will be the hardest hit

By Robin Young

TOP restaurants and high-class butchers are likely to be hardest hit by the ban on beef bones in food preparation.

Though less than 5 per cent of beef is sold on the bone in Britain, the proportion is much higher for sales from high-quality independent butchers. Cooks insist that beef cooked on the bone, which is the traditional British way of roasting, produces meat that is much better flavoured and more juicy.

Leading restaurants buy almost all their beef on the bone and use bones to make the stock that is the basis of their sauces. Now they will no longer be able to use bones in that way, serve osal, or produce classic dishes such as mœlle (with beef marrow).

Michel Roux, chef of the Michelin two-star restaurant Le Gavroche in London, said: "I buy all my Angus sirloins

on the bone. I buy four hindquarters of organic beef a week, all on the bone, and bone them myself. We have until now occasionally been featuring marrow dishes on our menu, telling customers exactly what they are but giving them the opportunity to eat what is one of the traditional delicacies. This is a very sad day.

"I think the ban is quite pointless and ridiculous. It will destroy confidence in beef all over again, and the Government should be making it clear that the best British beef is perfectly safe."

Frances Bissell, *The Times* cook, said: "I was just going to order my big rib of beef for Christmas, and I have been using marrow bones as recently as the day before yesterday. There is no doubt that beef cooks best on the bone, but if it is not safe on the bone where

do you stop? All meat has been on bones. How far back from the bone do you have to go to be safe?"

Beef-eater restaurants announced the immediate withdrawal of T-bone steaks from its outlets even before Mr Cunningham made his announcement in the House of Commons.

Laurence Isaacson, a director of Groupe Chez Gerard, which has five steak houses in London, and the founder of the Carnivores Club, said: "Ninety-seven per cent of our beef is already bought off the bone and if the Government says we cannot sell our *côtes de boeuf*, the only meat we serve on the bone, then obviously we will not. We are convinced that British beef has never been safer, and our sales for beef now are higher than they were before the BSE scare began."

By contrast the effect on supermarkets will be very slight. A typical Safeway store in London yesterday had precisely one joint of bone-in beef on its shelves, and Tony Combes, the company's head of public affairs, said: "Bone-in beef represents less than 1 per cent of our sales. If the Government requires we will take our wing rib beef off the bone and sell it at the same price."

Marks & Spencer said that it had no beef on the bone for sale, though it had been planning to sell wing rib joints on the bone for Christmas. That has been cancelled.

Tesco said last night that it had already withdrawn from sale all beef on the bone, and that it would give customers who had purchased any a full refund.

A spokeswoman for Hazlewood Foods said that the company would not now be including a frozen oxtail dish in a premium range prepared to recipes by the television chef Gary Rhodes, which had been announced last week for launch in February next year. "Obviously we will have to comply with what the Government requires," she said.



Devon farmers showing their support for British beef products at a rally yesterday. They later blockaded the centre of Newton Abbot

Farmers in despair at latest move

Fresh blow brings demands for cash aid for industry already hit by falling prices, writes Michael Hornsby

FARMERS reacted with anger and astonishment yesterday to the ban. Although less than five per cent of beef is sold bone-in beef producers said they feared the announcement would cause panic among consumers and a catastrophic collapse of already low prices for cattle.

There was also concern that the decision would be seized on by other European Union countries as a further reason for delaying any easing of the ban on British beef exports.

Anthony Gibson, regional director of the National Farmers' Union in southwest England, a prime cattle area, said: "This is a body blow to an industry already on its knees. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the new precautions, the impact they are bound to have on an already depressed market makes the case for support for the beef industry unanswerable."

Mr Gibson said the Government must now apply to Brussels for funds available to compensate British farmers for the strength of the pound, which had made imported beef and other foodstuffs cheaper and blunted the com-

petitiveness of British produce.

Sir David Naish, the national president of the NFU, recognised the need for the Government to act on scientific advice, but said the decision would cause "a great deal of despair among farmers after all they have been through".

Peter Stephens, a beef farmer and past chairman of the Cornish NFU, said: "This has come like bolt out of the blue when we least needed it. If the scientists are now saying marrow could be dangerous, are they going to ban blood next? It is becoming ridiculous. They might as well ban everything we produce and have done with it."

Ian MacNicol, president of the Country Landowners' Association, called for the same restrictions on bone-in meat to be applied to imports. "This is yet another regulation for the industry to deal with," he said. "We produce the best quality beef in the world yet our competitors from other

countries are able to import beef without the same level of quality control."

Farmers were already angry because of the Government's failure to apply for £500 million earmarked in Brussels to compensate them for the effect of currency fluctuations. Other EU coun-

tries have asked for and obtained such assistance.

So far Dr Cunningham has refused to heed farmers' pleas, arguing that British taxpayers would end up paying for the cost of 70 per cent of the aid because of the way national contributions to the EU budget are calculated.

Huge sums have already been spent or set aside to help the beef industry to cope with the crisis over BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) — £1.5 billion in 1996-97, £930 million in 1997-98, £563 million in 1998-99 and £498 million in 1999-2000. Much of this money has been spent on slaughtering and storing, prior to incineration, the rendered-down remains of more than 1.8 million cattle over the age of 30 months. Cattle older than this are regarded as being at greater risk of developing BSE.

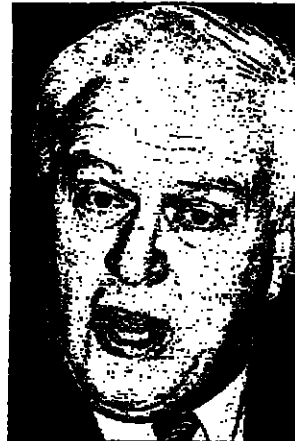
Things took a dramatic turn for the worse in March of last year when the Conservative Government announced

that eating BSE-infected beef was probably the cause of a new strain of the human brain condition Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) which has so far killed 22 people.

In 1995 total purchases of beef, including processed products, amounted to £4 billion. Last year, after the disclosure of the link between BSE and CJD, this dropped to £3.1 billion. An export trade of 275,000 tonnes of beef, worth £520 million, also came to a halt.

Beef consumption has recovered sharply this year and is expected to reach 839,000 tonnes, up 100,000 tonnes on 1996, though still below the pre-crisis level of 901,000 tonnes, according to the Meat and Livestock Commission. But the strong pound has sucked in imports, particularly from Ireland.

Other EU countries, though they have some cases of BSE, are not subject to any limit on the age of the animals they can sell for human consumption. This has been one of the causes of the past blockades this week by Welsh farmers protesting against cheap Irish beef.



Sir David Naish: saw the need to act

The experiments which led to ban

By Nigel Hawkes

THE SEAC results come from experiments in which cattle were deliberately infected with large doses of BSE in their feed, and tissues were tested for infectivity at different periods after infection.

The infected cattle were slaughtered in groups of three at four-month intervals after infection and tissues tested by injection into the brains of mice. The objective was to establish if they carried the BSE infective agent before the cattle showed any symptoms of the disease.

The latest experiments, which form the basis of SEAC's new advice, showed that two tissues previously not excluded from the food chain might be infectious — the dorsal root ganglia found within the bones of the spinal column, and the bone marrow. The ganglia are nerve

branches emerging from the spinal cord and within the bone, which would normally be found only in beef sold "on the bone" — rib or sirloin roasts or T-bone steaks.

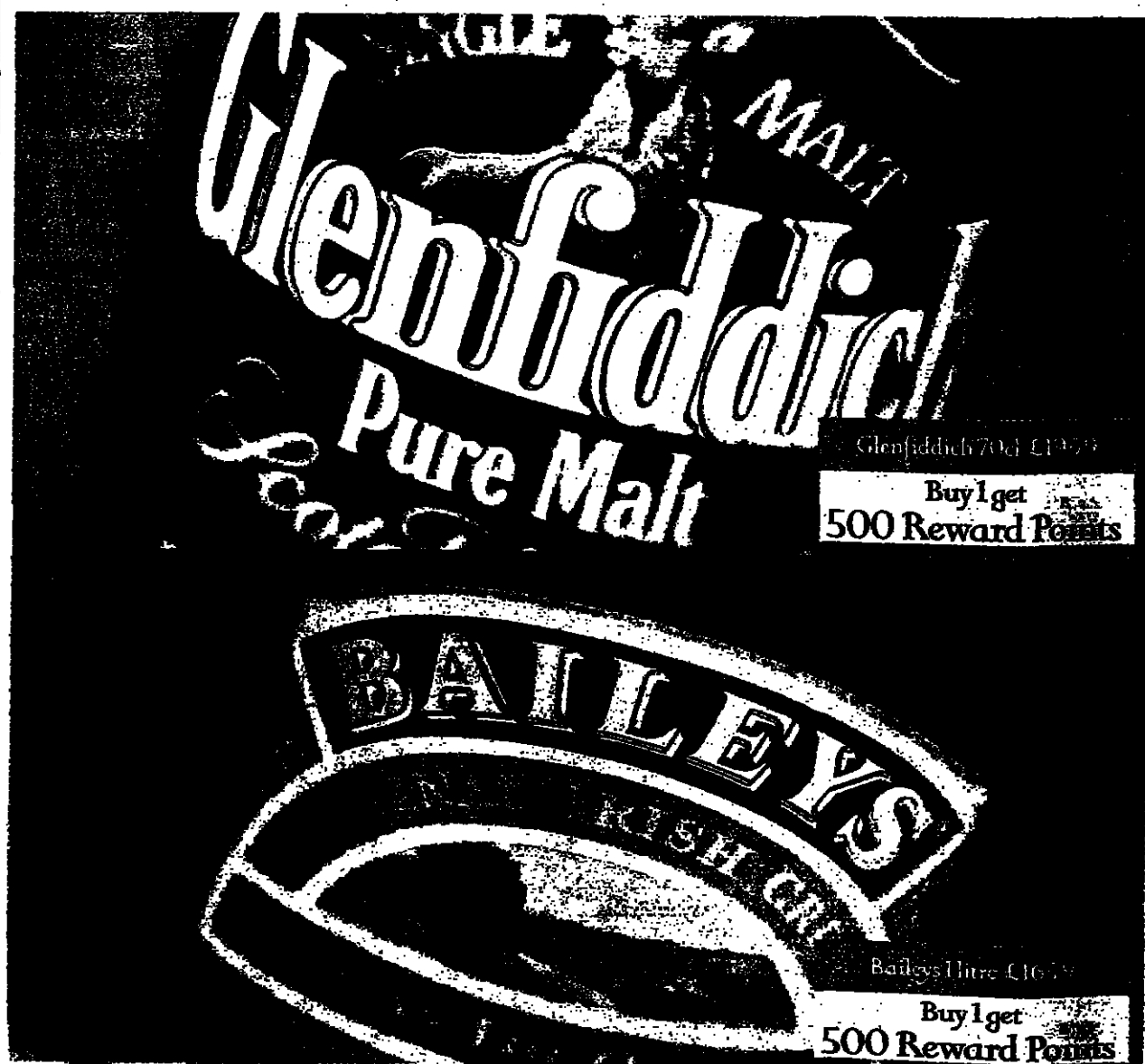
The ganglia were found to be infectious in cattle 32 months after infection with BSE but not in animals 26 months after infection. Clinical signs did not develop in these animals until 35 months after infection. That means there is a three-month gap in which these organs from apparently healthy cattle, might pass on the disease.

To play safe, SEAC has assumed that infectivity may be present earlier, seven months before symptoms appear. Under present slaughter policies, a very few cattle incubating the disease may enter the food chain: six this year and three in 1998.

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Murder nightmare ends after 25 years

BY RICHARD DUCE

Twenty-five years after a teenage soldier confessed to murder because he dreamt of the dead schoolgirl's face, the Court of Appeal has set him free.

The conviction of Andrews Evans, jailed at 17 for murdering Judith Roberts, 14, was held to be unsafe. Under today's criminal evidence rules, Evans's confessions would be inadmissible. There was also doubt about psychiatric evidence.

Judith was battered to death near her home in Tamworth, Staffordshire, in 1972. For more than 20 years, Mr Evans had accepted his guilt after being told there were no grounds for appeal. He had no recollection of the murder but told police: "I keep seeing a face. I want to see a picture of her. I wonder if I've done it."

Mr Evans, who will receive expert help in readjusting to the outside world, said after the three-minute hearing: "This verdict means that my long nightmare is finally over. For more than 25 years, I have been held responsible for a crime I did not commit. I will always be in debt to those who fought to bring me justice, never doubting my innocence, and supporting me through some dark times."

"My family and myself can now begin to be together, and start to heal the wounds caused by my wrongful imprisonment. Today is the first



My family and I can now start to heal the wounds. Today is the first step to a life beyond injustice

Andrew Evans

step to a life beyond injustice.

He began a campaign in 1994 to prove his innocence by contacting the organisation Justice. As a consequence he was moved from an open prison to a high-security jail.

It was shown that no blood from Judith had been discovered on Mr Evans's clothing and that an unidentified fingerprint on her cycle was not his.

The appeal judges, Lord Bingham of Cornhill, the Lord Chief Justice, Mr Justice Jowitt and Mr Justice Douglas Brown, were critical of the original police inquiry. They said: "Judged by the rules and standards of today, the conduct of this investigation by the police left much to be desired. The appellant was not cautioned as and when he should have been; he was not seen by a doctor when he first appeared at the police station ... he was not offered the

assistance of a solicitor."

But the judges conceded: "It seems likely that the police suspected the appellant of being mentally deranged. Our overall impression is that they treated him with sympathy and understanding."

Lord Justice Bingham said that in June 1972, Mr Evans was serving at Whittington Barracks, Lichfield, a few miles from where the body was found. "He had an unsuccessful childhood and adolescence, suffering from low self-esteem and a sense of failure. He had joined the Army in the hope of proving himself."

Evans was discharged on medical grounds after an asthma attack and handed in his uniform on June 8, 1972, the day after the murder. He said on a questionnaire that he had stayed in the barracks between 6pm and 10.30pm on June 7, naming three soldiers

who, he said, could verify that.

In October 1972 police called at his grandmother's house to ask him further questions as they had discovered that two of the soldiers had left the barracks before June 7 and they could not trace the third. The next morning, Mr Evans, who was taking a prescribed drug for depression, told his grandmother that he was going to the police station because he wanted to see a photograph of the murdered girl.

Lord Bingham said in the written ruling: "He was obviously worried, as if the matter had been on his mind all night, and she was unable to reassure him."

After telling police of his dream, he was asked whether he had killed Judith. He replied: "This is it - I don't know. Show me a picture and I'll tell you if I've seen it."

The judges held that original psychiatric testimony that Mr Evans had been suffering from amnesia could not be relied upon. A doctor told the Court of Appeal that Mr Evans has suffered "false memory" because of his extreme anxiety and hysterical state.

Staffordshire Police said that it did not intend to reopen the case as all lines of inquiry had been followed. A spokesman added that police had followed the procedures then in place "and there was never any question of misconduct by any of those officers."

1972: Vietnam, Heath and Munich



Roberts: murdered

When Andrew Evans confessed to murder in 1972, the Vietnam War was at its height, Ted Heath was Prime Minister and Richard Nixon US President, and decimal currency was only a year old. *Amazing Grace* topped the charts - but it provided a rare moment of serenity in a year scarred by terrorism and war.

Conflict in Northern Ireland was worsening. It was the year of Bloody Sunday, when 13 civilians were killed during an Army dispersal of marchers in Londonderry. The British Embassy in Dublin was burned down and an IRA blast killed seven at the Parachute Regiment officers' mess at Aldershot. Eleven Israeli athletes were killed by Arab terrorists at the Olympic Games in Munich. Virtually the whole of Britain suffered electricity blackouts because of a miners' strike. In a plane crash at Staines, near Heathrow, 118 people were killed, and the Duke of Windsor died.

Sir John Betjeman became Poet Laureate and dancers flocked to *The Godfather*. Derby County were League Champions, Leeds United lifted the FA Cup and Tottenham the UEFA Cup.



Evans: confessed

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The artist Zheng Shuang, the niece of China's last emperor, displays one of her woodcut prints yesterday

Chinese artist tells of imperial past

By MARTIN FLETCHER
CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE niece of China's last emperor held court yesterday in the front room of a lecturer's modest semi in south Belfast. Zheng Shuang, 61, an exponent of the ancient Chinese art of woodcut printing and distinguished professor at the

Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, had flown in to give a lecture at the University of Ulster's School of Fine and Applied Arts. Until she was 9, Zheng Shuang enjoyed a privileged existence in Manchuria, where the Japanese had installed her uncle, Pu Yi, who had been deposed as Emperor of all China in 1912, as their puppet ruler. At the end of the

war, Pu was captured by the Soviet Army. He was later "re-educated" by the Chinese Communists.

The girl and her parents spent two years walking to Beijing through the chaos of revolutionary China. In Beijing her mother's relatives took them in, and they lived as humble citizens, never speaking about their past.

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Anti-depressants 'are as addictive as tranquillisers'

ANTI-DEPRESSANT drugs such as Prozac could prove as addictive as tranquillisers, according to a study published today by the medical consumer group Social Audit.

The study claims there is now overwhelming unpublished evidence of the risk of dependence on the drugs, with many people having marked withdrawal symptoms when they try to stop taking them.

Eli Lilly, makers of Prozac, said that evidence did not support the idea that the drug was habit forming.

"As doctors have been led to believe that withdrawal symptoms are very rare, they may yet again be mistaking the psychic distress caused by drug withdrawal for relapse," the report says.

The author, Charles Medawar, is a member of the World Health Organisation's advisory panel on drug policies and management. He has long been a thorn in the flesh of the pharmaceutical industry and recently wrote a book claiming that almost every drug prescribed for psychological distress is addictive.

There is now compelling evidence that much of what was called anxiety in the days of Valium has in effect been repositioned or relabelled as

Valium is out,
Prozac is in,
but the risk of
dependency could
be as great. Ian
Murray reports

depression," the report says. "The decline in tranquilliser prescribing in the late 1980s has been matched by huge increases in anti-depressant use. Then we were anxious: now we are depressed. Valium out: Prozac in."

There was a 60 per cent increase in anti-depressant drug prescribing from 1992 to 1996. "This huge increase cannot be explained by superiority of the newer anti-depressants over the older ones. For all the hype, the similarities between older and newer antidepressants are far greater than any differences between them, another reason to be concerned about dependence risk."

The report, published in *The International Journal of Risk & Safety in Medicine*, claims that the drugs have not yet been used long enough for

anyone to be confident of knowing if there are any long-term effects.

Mr Medawar says the Government's Medicines Control Agency (MCA) and the independent Committee on Safety of Medicines were mistaken in believing there were no addiction problems. He cites their own published figures on the number of cases of reported adverse effects of the drugs. These show 302 cases of withdrawal reactions to paroxetine, sold as Seroxat by Smith-Kline Beecham, and 58 cases involving fluoxetine, which Eli Lilly markets as Prozac.

The MCA said in a statement last night that withdrawal reactions had been noted with the drugs, but there had been no other characteristics of addiction. Prescribers were informed of withdrawal reactions through a drug safety bulletin and appropriate warnings appear in authorised product information.

Eli Lilly said that since it was approved for marketing in 1986, 30 million people had taken Prozac. There had been 6,000 scientific publications addressing its safety and it was shown to be an effective anti-depressant well tolerated by most. The evidence did not support the idea that the drug was habit forming.



Jerome McKenzie, 3, has fully recovered from lung injuries caused by smoke

Surgeons breathe new life into smoke boy

EIGHTEEN months after doctors almost gave Jerome McKenzie up for dead, the three-year-old was guest of honour yesterday at the winter meeting of the British Association of Plastic Surgeons in London, where the technique which saved his life was explained (Ian Murray writes).

Jerome began to deteriorate after he was rescued from a fire at his home in Nottingham. Inflammation built up from the smoke he had inhaled and his lungs were unable to cope with the resulting fluid.

Then he was given the new type of treatment at Glenfield Hospital in Leicester, was on the mend within three days and now appears to have recovered completely.

Hugh Henderson, a consultant plastic surgeon who is part of the specialist team at the hospital, which leads the world in the technique, told the meeting that it was an adaptation of heart bypass surgery. The blood was drained from the right upper chamber of the patient's heart, passed through an oxygenator and returned to the circulation system. This meant that the damaged lung was able to rest and recover.

"20 years ago treatment of people in this condition was all but hopeless," Mr Henderson said.

Saturday in THE TIMES



WHITEHOUSE
Fast, funny
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Oestrogen deficiency in males linked to sterility

By Nigel Hawkes
SCIENCE EDITOR

THE female hormone oestrogen may be just as important to men, a study has shown. Male mice denied the effects of this quintessential female hormone are infertile, and a scientist has suggested the hormone may also cause problems for humans.

The finding raises fresh fears that oestrogen-like chemicals in the environment may be contributing to a decline in sperm quality in men.

Rex Hess of the University of Illinois and colleagues have studied a breed of mice that have had the gene responsible for making oestrogen receptors removed. The effect is the same as having no oestrogen.

These mice appear normal until puberty, but they never become fertile. Dr Hess reports in *Nature* that this is caused by a disruption in the process by which sperm is made. The cells surround them with a fluid in order to carry them to the next stage, maturation. At this point in a normal mouse — and, it is postulated, other mammals including man — most of the fluid is reabsorbed, to concentrate the sperm. However, in the experimental mice the fluid builds up, damaging the testes. Any sperm that do survive fail to develop, because the fluid in which they are dispersed is too thin, diluting the factors that make the sperm mature.

The experiments show that male mice lacking the influence of oestrogen are sterile. Oestrogens are present in large amounts in human semen, so there is no reason to doubt that they perform the same function there.

The implications are drawn out by Richard Sharpe of the Medical Research Council's Reproductive Biology Unit in Edinburgh in a commentary in *Nature*. He says that there is a possibility that exposure to oestrogen-like chemicals in the environment may be responsible for changes such as reduced sperm counts and testicular cancer.

Love rats show why men are put off passion

By Our Science Editor

SCIENTISTS have discovered why it is that even the most ardent male has to pause between bouts of passion. Serotonin, the mood chemical in the brain, appears to control the gap between orgasms... at least, in rats.

The finding could help to produce anti-depressants that do not suppress enjoyment of sex. Drugs such as Prozac work by slowing the reabsorption of serotonin after it has been released from nerve cells. A side-effect in some men is difficulty in achieving an erection or reaching orgasm.

Elaine Hull of New York State University, Buffalo, reasoned that serotonin might control the latency period between orgasms. But she needed to know in which part of the brain serotonin had that effect, she told *New Scientist*.

Dr Hull put small tubes into various parts of the brains of rats and observed how much serotonin was produced when they mated. In one area, the lateral hypothalamus, serotonin levels surged after ejaculation, falling in the few minutes before the rat was ready to mate again.

To confirm the finding, the team injected this part of the brain with the drug alaproclate, which works like Prozac in slowing re-uptake of serotonin. The rats paused for three times as long between matings as did un-drugged rats.

When the drug was injected less than a millimetre from the critical region, it had no effect on mating.

In humans, this region lies just behind the eyes. If drug designers could create compounds that avoided effects on serotonin in only that region — a difficult task, admittedly — they might produce anti-depressants with no effects on sexual function.

John Bancroft of the Kinsey Institute in Bloomington, Indiana, said that naturally high levels of serotonin in that region may lie behind some types of impotence.

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Remote forests show fatal effects of global warming

GRAPHIC evidence of the deadly effect of global warming in a remote corner of Central America has been presented to a world summit on climate control.

Researchers studying some of the globe's rarest and most spectacular amphibians in the Monteverde region of Costa Rica have discovered that 40 per cent of species there have disappeared during the 1990s.

The findings were released yesterday in a report by BirdLife International, of Cambridge, and the World Wide Fund for Nature at the Kyoto climate conference in Japan.

The losses, which cover up to 20 species including colourful harlequin frogs, have occurred at a time of rising temperatures in the region. These have pushed the area's moist clouds, formed by trade winds on low-lying slopes and which drift through the forest, some 100 metres up the mountain.

The scientists, led by Alan Pounds of the Monteverde Research Station, believe the frogs and toads need the moist conditions to survive and have been unable to respond to the rapid loss of damp conditions at the lower levels.

Barnaby Briggs of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds said yesterday that other species capable of reacting to the sudden climate change

The disappearance of tropical species has worrying implications for Britain. Nick Nuttall reports from the International Conference on Climate Control in Kyoto



had confirmed the trend. Birds, such as the keel-billed toucan which has a black body, yellow breast and giant lime green and red bill, have moved to higher altitudes during the past seven years along with other species such as blue-crowned motmots.

At least one amphibian species, the golden toad, now appears extinct as it was only known in one 30 kilometre-square region in the reserve. "The scientists have searched everywhere but have been unable to find any. They have been very alarmed," Mr Briggs said.

Lizard-like species, called anoline, are also reacting to the movement of the clouds away from the lower slopes. Like the birds, these creatures have moved 100 metres up the mountain.

John Wilkinson, a biologist at the Open University in Milton Keynes and a senior member of the task force studying declining amphibians populations, said yesterday that rising temperatures brought about by climate

change could also be behind the decline of frogs in Britain. Scientists have found that pond temperatures in southern England have been rising. Mr Wilkinson said the higher temperatures meant the frogs might be burning up more fat reserves during their winter hibernation, making them less fit and able to mate when emerging in the spring.

Mr Briggs said declining amphibian numbers were a worldwide phenomenon. Various theories have been advanced, including deadly viruses spread by the pet

trade and the thinning of the ozone layer.

"But the ultraviolet light from a thinner ozone layer cannot penetrate these cloud forests. The suspicion must now be pointing at global warming which in turn may be stressing the animals, making them more susceptible to disease," he said.

The report chronicles changes in behaviour and population decline of various species across the world in recent years. A study of 14 species of European butterflies shows that nine have shifted their distribution up to 125 miles northward. "The general northward shift indicates response to some large-scale environmental change. A warming climate is most likely," says the report.

The loss of up to 90 per cent of five million sooty shearwaters off America's West Coast

between 1987 and 1994 is linked to rising sea temperatures. The report also documents the movement of alpine flowers up the slopes of mountain ranges, including the Alps and Cairngorms, indicating their habitat is being squeezed by climate change.

The study comes as 160 nations meet to try to agree on legally binding targets for cutting carbon dioxide emissions from power stations, transport and other industrial sources. John Gummer, the former Environment Minister, renewed his attack on America for failing to back big cuts in emissions. His attack was echoed by the former Director-General of Japan's environment agency who accused his country of doing too little.

Hedgehog numbers in Britain are falling by 100,000 annually, largely because of global warming, according to the British Hedgehog Preservation Society. Early springs caused by mild weather prompt hedgehogs to come out of hibernation and breed early. "Then along comes a cold snap and many of the new-born die," Adrian Coles, the society's chief executive, said. He encouraged householders to feed them pet food and crushed nuts in preparation for their winter fast.



The harlequin frog, now lost, and the study area



The spectacular keel-billed toucan has been forced to move to a higher altitude

Tony Blair, page 22

Dinosaurs' death blow is given its vital statistics

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

THE dinosaurs were killed by the impact on the Earth of an object about seven to eight miles in diameter, which carved out a crater 60 miles across, a team from Imperial College has concluded.

The impact happened 65 million years ago in what is now the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico. But the evidence of the impact, a huge crater, is covered by later sedimentary rocks, and part of it is under the sea, making it difficult to work out just how big it was.

A team led by Jo Morgan and Mike Walker of Imperial College has used a technique developed by the oil industry to provide an answer.

Seismic sound signals from deeply buried structures were used to generate a profile. In this case, the team reports in *Nature*, the initial crater was about 62.5 miles across.

It lasted only a few seconds or minutes before materials

slumping down into it at the edges moved the perimeter outwards, leading to the subsequent confusion. But the size of the transient crater enables the size of the object responsible to be worked out.

If it was an asteroid it must have been 7.5 miles across, if a comet from 5 to 8.75 miles. The team also calculates that 12,200 cubic miles of material must have been ejected by the impact, making a hole at its deepest of about 25 miles. The rim would have stood five miles high.

The rapier-like clawed forearm of a 34ft-long flesh-eating baryonyx has been unearthed from a box of old fossils. Steve Hurl, curator at the Isle of Wight Museum of Geology, recognised the dinosaur remains in the box, which had been handed to the museum ten years ago. It had been found many years ago on the southwest coast of the Isle of Wight.

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BY DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

He expressed amazement that an institution handling £98 million during the past five years could not produce a

Emphasising the committee's commitment to subsidy for the arts, he expressed concern about the mishandling of tax-



Asked why Mary Allen, the chief executive, had been particularly singled out for criticism, he emphasised that they were concerned only about the way in which she had been

Earl Gowrie. "We found Miss Allen's convoluted explanation of her actions unconvincing . . . Given her experience of public office, Miss Allen's conduct fell seriously below the standards to be expected of

Asked why the committee had not called for resignations from anyone at the Arts Council — which is accused of violating its own conditions in awarding the lottery grant — Mr. Kaufman said, "I don't know."

Mr Kaufman, a former *Daily Mirror* journalist and sketch writer for the 1960s television show *That Was The Week That Was*, is feared at

Much of the devastating report reflects the genuine anger Mr Kaufman, an opera buff, feels towards the ROH management. But the language bears all the hallmarks of an unbridled, vituperative attack.

BY JOHN ALLISON

British companies will doubtless be watching with interest.

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Explicit attack is a rare event

By Donna Rippey

their approaches, those party
ties inevitably temper any

Rare calls for resignations usually have little impact.


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Virtuoso in vitriol performs his masterpiece

NO fiasco in British cultural life is complete until Gerald Kaufman has conducted one of his virtuoso masterclasses in the art of scathing denunciation. His Culture Select Committee reports on the moribund film industry and the British Library debate were richly vitriolic entertainments. But his aria *furioso* about Covent Garden will surely be judged his masterpiece.

Like the earlier reports, it comments on events that mostly happened long ago; it is obviously personal and partial; and it suggests no way forward beyond the tabloidish "sack the lot of them". But for catharsis of national ire and frustration, it is priceless. Covent Garden has been appall-

ingly run for years. It has brought the name of opera into disrepute, and that saddens true music-lovers. Time and again it has put top-class singers and dancers on stage, only to see the headlines stolen by astonishing (but true) backstage tales of financial and planning disasters.

It is buffeted by vested interests: rich patrons; Arts Council bureaucrats; unions; sponsors; superstar divas. And yet, when the going gets tough, they all melt away. Nobody admits culpability for any disaster. The one time you never hear at Covent Garden is *The Back Stage Here*. And that particularly applies to the source of Covent Garden's present financial woes:



Gerald Kaufman's report on the Royal Opera House shows with grotesque clarity the need for a wholesale shake-up in arts bodies, writes Richard Morrison

its bungled plans for its own closure, a time-wasting saga of unrealistic projects and soft-brained management.

None of this is news. But Mr Kaufman chronicles it in such excruciating detail, and embellishes it with such a rich barrage of insults, that most readers will thoroughly sympathise with his

final Salome-like cry for "heads on a platter". He wants the Covent Garden board and chief executive to resign forthwith, to be replaced by a hard-nosed "philistine" administrator (appointed by the Culture Secretary) who will put all the arts types in order.

Unfortunately, the result would probably be the reverse of what

Mr Kaufman desires, which is the successful completion of the opera house redevelopment and the speedy establishment of sound managerial practices.

The present Covent Garden board is bound up with the private fundraising on which the house depends. Indeed, it is only through Vivien Duffield's private wealth that Covent Garden is continuing to trade at present. Unless the Government is prepared to pick up the entire bill for running a grand opera house (which is politically inconceivable) the consequences of Covent Garden's millionaire backers simply walking away from Covent Garden would be catastrophic. Second, the new chief

executive, Mary Allen, has only been in place for three months, and has already supervised a £15 million "rescue package" raised entirely from private funds. She achieved this without once demanding a bail-out from public funds. Fairness, as well as practicality, suggests that she be allowed to proceed with her rescue plan.

Ms Allen is given a roasting in Mr Kaufman's report, mainly for her "convoluted explanation" of the mysterious circumstances in which she got her job. Yet he lets off, with barely a caution, her predecessor Sir Jeremy Isaacs, who was nominally in charge of Covent Garden for nearly the whole of the period under scrutiny.

That, too, seems both odd and unjust.

What Mr Kaufman's probing does demonstrate, with grotesque clarity, is the need for a wholesale shake-up in the structures of arts organisations, of which Covent Garden is but the most accident-prone. The Arts Council is shown to have suspected a looming disaster, but never had the clout to demand the changes necessary to avert it. The Garden management is shown to have vacillated fatally between the whims of its various masters, public and private.

William Rees-Mogg, page 22
Leading article, page 23
Britten preview, page 43

EDITED EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT

WHO cares about opera, anyway? Again and again we have been told that people do not want the taxes they pay to go towards funding a pastime for the elite, when many basic services have to operate on tight financial margins. This report demonstrates that, while this committee wholeheartedly endorses state funding of the arts, the arts must not try the patience of those who do not share this committee's view by overspending, running up inordinate deficits, involving themselves in questionable activities

or behaving as if they somehow have more right to taxpayers' money than the health service or education. We took oral evidence in four acts, with an interval for the summer recess. Among the witnesses were Chris Smith MP, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Earl Gowrie, the chairman of the Arts Council, Lord Chadlington, the chairman of the Royal Opera House, Mary Allen, its chief executive, and her two immediate predecessors Genista McIntosh and Sir Jeremy Isaacs.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In September 1996 Lord Chadlington succeeded Sir Angus Stirling as chairman of the Royal Opera House. Shortly before his arrival, the finance director had departed; his successor did not take up post until 1 July 1997.

Ms Genista McIntosh took up her post as chief executive at the beginning of January 1997. She found that the organisation had "grave problems, managerially and in other respects". By the end of financial year 1996-97 the House had an accumulated deficit of £4.7 million. Faced with the prospect of insolvency in late July, the House was only saved by a £2 million subvention, the donors making it clear that they would only bale the House out once.

Ms Allen took up her position as chief executive at the beginning of September 1997, by which time the Covent Garden home had closed for redevelopment. She told the committee that the situation was even worse than her predecessor had suggested.

We requested from the Royal Opera House a month by month balance sheet. Ms Allen stated that "it is not possible since the Royal Opera House has not in the past produced it."

We regard the lack of financial information available to the board and the management of the Royal Opera House as deplorable. In the light of the fact that the House has received £98 million of taxpayers' money in the last five years, we are astonished that the Arts Council seems to have expressed no concern at this state of affairs. There is no evidence to suggest that the

Arts Council even ascertained that this state of affairs existed.

THE BOARD

The board of the Royal Opera House is composed of men and women who are unremunerated and seeking to oversee its work in time "carved out of our professional lives". The House is a charity and so the directors are trustees.



Plácido Domingo in *Simon Boccanegra*

The committee believes that, as a body, the board of directors has fallen severely short of standards. In addition, we question the vigilance of the Charity Commissioners.

CLOSURE

From our examination of the minutes of its meetings, we conclude that the board of the Royal Opera House (with the

exceptions of Mr Gavron and Mrs Duffield) demonstrated incompetence in their handling of the closure plans in 1995. The disastrous misjudgments made then meant that the companies were condemned to a nomadic option which could have been avoided and which shows signs of being financially disastrous. The failure of the board in 1995 are responsible in considerable measure for the House's current crisis.

ARTS COUNCIL

The Arts Council's own 1992 appraisal recommended improved management practices "should be in place before any increased funding, whether capital or revenue, is considered". Yet a capital grant of £55 million was agreed. This was a violation by the Arts Council of conditions which the council itself had set.

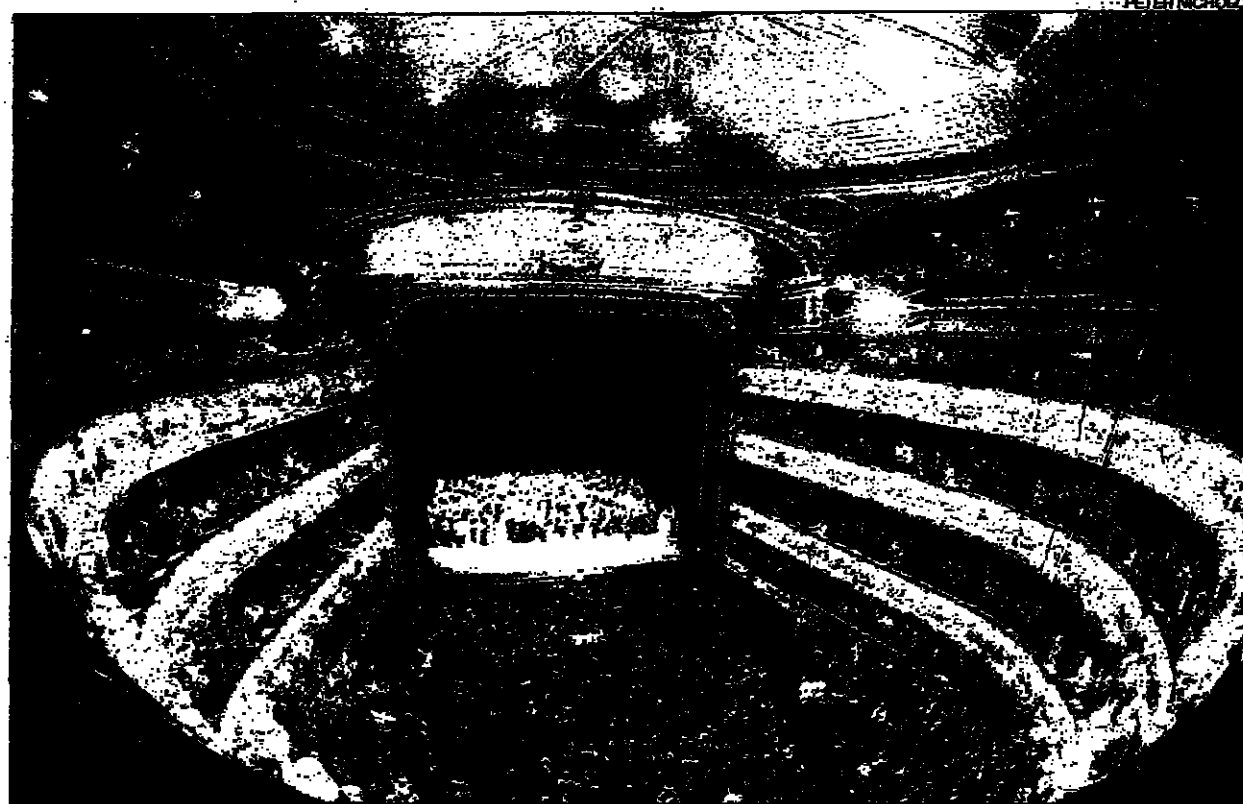
The committee is concerned at this serious shortcoming in financial control of the lottery grant. This state of affairs also raises the question of to what extent financial control is satisfactory for the other lottery grants by the Arts Council. This matter appears to be ripe for inquiry.

LOBBYING

In not satisfying itself that the Royal Opera House was taking the necessary steps to control its deficit and ensure its financial viability during the closure, the Arts Council did no service either to the Royal Opera House or to the public purse.

FINANCIAL DISASTERS

When Lord Chadlington be-



"A succession of opera and ballet lovers have brought a great and valuable institution to its knees"

came chairman of the Royal Opera House in September 1996, the organisation's financial position was already insecure. There had been no finance director in post since that spring. All the preferred options for the closure period had fallen through. There was a deficit in 1995-96 of £3.1 million.

For none of this can Lord Chadlington be blamed. However, we are not convinced of the adequacy of his efforts to alleviate the plight. In view of his criticisms of the adequacy of financial information and financial management, Lord Chadlington should have appointed a new finance director with greater urgency, instead of permitting nearly a year to elapse.

We also believe that he was at fault in failing to review fully, and insist on revisions to, the plans for the closure period, a failure which ensured that a fragile financial position became acute.

The Royal Opera House has had appointed to its board and its senior administrative post men and women of considerable distinction in business

and public life. They were drawn to the House by their love of opera and ballet, their admiration for the unquestioned quality of the companies. The admiration appears to have dulled their critical faculties.

REPLACEMENT

In January 1997 Ms Genista McIntosh took up the post of Chief Executive in succession to Sir Jeremy Isaacs. She arrived with high hopes and amid high expectations. Within five months she had left the House, and her replacement by Ms Allen had been announced.

Although the funding agreement between the Arts Council and the Royal Opera House stated unequivocally that the House "should advertise nationally for all vacancies for senior appointments", Lord Chadlington claimed to be anxious to avoid a repeat of the prolonged process preceding Ms McIntosh's appointment. He therefore argued for a new appointment as a matter of urgency.

In Lord Chadlington's words,

Ms Allen's advice on this occasion was that "it would be inappropriate for you to discuss this matter with the Arts Council. You must discuss this matter instead with the Department of National Heritage."

Ms Allen justified this advice to us on the following grounds: it was for her to broach first with Lord Gowrie the possibility of her own departure, but this could not be done immediately because Ms McIntosh might decide to continue in her post. We found Ms Allen's convoluted explanation of her actions entirely unconvincing.

She told Lord Gowrie on May 8 of her intention to accept the job offer but requested complete confidentiality until the offer was confirmed. Lord Gowrie told us that he was "gobsmacked" by this news.

She should separately, and without delay, have informed Lord Gowrie that she had been asked to be a candidate for the post. Given her experience of public office, Ms Allen's conduct fell seriously below the standards to be

expected of the principal officer of a public body whose loyalty should first and foremost be to the organisation which employs her.

Lord Chadlington sought to arrange a meeting with the Secretary of State on May 7. At the meeting, Lord Chadlington explained the circumstances of Ms McIntosh's departure. He explained his intention to appoint Ms Allen in her place. The Secretary of State expressed a number of concerns.

Mr Smith had been Secretary of State for only four days when this meeting took place. He should have sought more information in advance about the matters to be raised. There was a case for adjourning or postponing the meeting to satisfy himself of his own powers in relation to Ms Allen's appointment and the Arts Council's instructions on the method of appointment.

He should have consulted further about the propriety of her departure from the Arts Council.

Reduction in seat prices and means of ensuring the widest possible availability of lower price seats must be at the heart of the access policy to be produced by the Royal Opera House in the next few months.

There have been many failures by the board which call into question the entitlement of the current chairman, the current chief executive and the board as a body to receive and administer public money.

The current board should dissolve itself, and the chief executive should resign with immediate effect. The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport must assume overall responsibility for running the Royal Opera House during the closure period and must be accountable for the financial solvency of the project.

We further recommend that the Secretary of State should appoint an administrator to take the place of the board and the chief executive of the Royal Opera House for the remainder of the closure period.

The administrator should have the right to consult a small number of advisers, who could, if selected, include members of the current board.

His or her mission would, however, not be to realise the assets of the House, but to ensure the long-term provision of international standard opera and ballet at Covent Garden.

The administrator must be chosen for his or her business skills; we would prefer to see the House run by a philistine with the requisite financial acumen than by the succession of opera and ballet lovers who have brought a great and valuable institution to its knees.

Should the board and the chief executive decline to accept the committee's recommendation that they resign, we recommend the Secretary of State make clear to the Arts Council that he expects them to cease payments of grant-in-aid to the Royal Opera House forthwith.

Christmas Day

25

December

"Thanks ever so much for the jumper..."

Boxing Day

26

December

"No, really, I do like it, honest..."

New Year's Day

1

January

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Sex offenders face being supervised for up to ten years

The Home Secretary has presented a Bill to 'give back power to law-abiding people'. Stewart Tendler reports

RAPISTS and paedophiles will be supervised for up to ten years after leaving prison under law and order legislation announced yesterday by Jack Straw, the Home Secretary. Serious violent offenders will face a supervision period of up to five years.

Mr Straw said the new law would allow judges to extend sentences to include a period of supervision. If the offender broke the supervision order he could then face penalties including a return to jail.

At present offenders can be released from jail on parole after serving half their sentence. Once they have completed three quarters the parole ends. The extended sentences will be applied to all jailed sex offenders and to violent criminals sentenced to four years or more. Courts could not impose a total sentence of longer than the maximum jail sentence for the crime.

According to the Home Office, 2,400 sex offenders are convicted each year. Officials estimate that about 120 each year will be sentenced to the maximum supervision of ten years and another 360 will be supervised for five years. About 320 violent offenders a year will be subject to supervision orders.

Probation officers will carry out the supervision, and the Home Office expects that up to 600 more staff will be needed to cover all the new powers in the legislation.

The new order and the

supervision schemes are among 20 proposals set out in the Government's Crime and Disorder Bill published yesterday. The Bill includes more stringent treatment for child and teenage offenders and their parents, new racial offences and curbs on disruptive neighbours. The Bill opens the way for the early release of 6,000 offenders per year who could be electronically tagged, and drug treatment orders for another 6,250 criminals.

Summing up the legislation, Mr Straw said: "It's about implementing a zero tolerance strategy. It's not a magic wand. There are no magic wands about dealing with human behaviour. The more I am able to make people feel safer, the better it is. Success will be people feeling safer."

Mr Straw said the legislation did not mean that more offenders would be jailed. The measures for dealing with young offenders should eventually prevent them reaching the adult prisons. The Bill also reflected the frustrations felt by police, communities and local authorities who were unable to deal with high levels of disorder, harassment and racial attacks.

He said that the Bill was about "giving power back to people in law-abiding communities and undermining and disrupting the gangs, the drugs dealers, the criminal families and those people whose sport is baiting their neighbours".

The planned anti-social behaviour orders will cover anyone aged 10 and over. They will be aimed at offenders who harass neighbours or cause persistent trouble on council estates. Police and local authorities will be able to use the

lower burden of proof required in civil cases to obtain the restraining orders, and breaches could be punished by up to five years in prison.

If a child is subject to an order, his parents will have to attend counselling or parenting sessions. Anyone whose children regularly play truant will face parenting orders.

The Bill will also create an offence of racially aggravated crime. This will include assaults, public order offences and harassment. The offence will be brought if the offender shows hostility to the victim's membership, or association with, a racial group.

The widely trailed Bill is expected to cost an extra £40 million per year in drug testing and £35 million a year for the use of electronic tagging. A number of the plans



Straw: implementing a zero tolerance strategy

will be tested on pilot schemes starting in 1999.

Yesterday the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (Nacro) welcomed the extended supervision for sex offenders, saying that research had shown that compulsory supervision markedly reduced re-offending. Nacro also

approved of measures on drug treatment, tagging and pre-trial time limits, but said that it was concerned at the lowering of the age of criminal responsibility and the effect that greater use of secure accommodation would have on teenagers.

The Association of Chief Police Officers welcomed the Bill but said it feared that attempts to speed up the criminal justice system would be frustrated.

Blair is playing chairman to Brown's chief executive

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

TONY BLAIR has learnt from the Bernie Ecclestone affair and other autumn squalls. Warning signals about problems ahead were not recognised early enough. The Prime Minister now accepts that the political team should be integrated more closely with the government machine. The informal habits of work which he and his colleagues developed in Opposition will now be channelled more through the formal Whitehall infrastructure.

There is a balance between more ordered decision-making and not being trapped by bureaucratic inertia — the Blair team has been keen to strengthen the "centre" by improving co-ordination between No 10 and the Cabinet Office in driving the Government's agenda. Peter Mandelson has become Mr Blair's short-term problem-solver, while Lord Irvine of Lairg has sought to bring coherence and direction to the Government's constitutional agenda. This has been linked with a further downgrading of the Cabinet as even a residual decision-making body.

These trends have worried some Whitehall watchers. Professor Peter Hennessy noted in his *Government and Opposition* lecture at the London School of Economics on Tuesday that there are fashions to these things. Nonetheless, Mr Blair has developed what the professor eloquently describes as a "Napoleonic" style of premiership. There are advantages: a clear sense of priorities and focus on long-term problems such as education standards. But No 10 has strengthened its control, notably over presentation, prompting the professor to give warning that "it may not be fully appreciated in Downing Street even now, but such an absolutist approach was neither desirable on constitutional grounds nor realistic in practical terms". There are risks too: a solo decision-making centre means that the buck stops with the Prime Minister.

Other Whitehall watchers, such as Sir Peter Kemp and David Walker in today's *New Statesman*, argue for a Prime Minister's Department, including the Cabinet Office's policy functions, to chase progress across the machine. This is rejected by Professor Hennessy on the ground that we traditionally have a collective rather than a single executive. Cabinet governance is partly lost. Even though the Government is highly unlikely to set up a Prime Minister's Department as such, if only to avoid charges of presidentialism, it is moving gradually in that direction.

But there is a second aspect — the involvement of ministers in collective decision-making. Professor Hennessy believes in creating a small inner cabinet to provide a broader overview of strategy, reinforced by the full Cabinet "asserting its powers of collective discussion" every Thursday. Mr Blair relies on an inner group of Gordon Brown, Mr Mandelson, Lord

Irvine, John Prescott and Robin Cook, though more bilaterally than collectively. Mr Blair resents talk that he has bypassed the Cabinet, and he has so far been not quite as absolutist as the professor fears. But I think Mr Blair underestimates the need to involve his Cabinet as a whole, not least as an insurance when the going gets rough.

An important qualification to prime ministerial centralism also comes from the omnipresence of the Treasury, taking the lead, for example, on welfare reform and via the comprehensive spending review. Mr Brown, and Alistair Darling, Chief Secretary, have to be squared on everything that matters in Whitehall. It is, as Professor Hennessy points out, absurd constitutionally to talk of Prime Minister Brown to President Blair. But there is a sense in which the "centre" is divided with Mr Blair as chairman of new Labour, its public face and "big picture" man, and Mr Brown as the hard-driving chief executive.

PETER RIDDELL

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THE MAIN POINTS

- Anti-social behaviour orders to stop people harassing or intimidating their neighbours
- New court orders for the parents of delinquent children
- Child safety orders for the under-10s linked to crime or anti-social behaviour
- Curfew orders to keep under-10s off the streets at night
- Abolition of the *claf incipax* rule that a prosecution must prove that a child between ten and 13 is capable of crime
- New system of police warnings and young offender programmes to replace cautions
- Courts to be able to remind children aged 12 and over direct to secure accommodation
- Reparation orders to make young offenders apologise to or compensate their victims
- Extended supervision for paedophiles, rapists and other violent offenders after they are freed from jail
- Orders banning sex offenders from vulnerable areas
- New offences of racially aggravated offences
- Treatment and testing orders for drug-addicted offenders
- Tougher supervision orders for offenders

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Britain rejects Jewish plea to open Allies' files

BRITAIN and France yesterday rejected calls by Jewish leaders to open the files of the Tripartite Gold Commission to see whether the Allies knowingly restored tainted gold to liberated countries.

Britain insisted it would be inappropriate to open the files until the commission, founded in 1946, finally ended its work. This is expected in the next few months. But the World Jewish Congress claimed that, after the war, the Allies knowingly held on to gold belonging to Holocaust victims.

The congress told the Nazi gold conference in London it had uncovered Tripartite Gold Commission documents which showed that, by 1950, it was already realised that gold belonging to individuals had been wrongly sent to a pool intended only for national gold seized by the Nazis from government reserves.

In the post-war years, gold from individual victims was used to compensate countries. There was a shortfall in the national pool because much of the gold looted from government reserves was still in Swiss banks. Up to 60 tonnes of personal gold may have gone into the pool, it was claimed. It may have been mistaken for government gold reserves because the Nazis melted down jewellery and coins into ingots.

The row blew up on the second day of the 41-nation conference, called by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary. America said it was happy to open all the archives now, but Britain insisted that if the details were public it would provoke a debate which could delay distribution of remaining funds.

Other arguments also surfaced during the closed sessions, with angry exchanges between Jewish groups and the representatives of Croatia, who claimed: "The Croatian people fought Nazi invaders on a massive scale."

They did not mention Croatia's puppet fascist government of the time. Angry Jewish spokesmen said the

By Adrian Lee
and Michael
Binyon at the
London talks
on Nazi gold

point of the conference was honesty about history.

Romany representatives yesterday accused the Vatican of taking in gold shipped there after the murder of some 28,000 Gypsies in Croatian camps during the war. The Romany representative said that Croatian Catholics, implicated in the murders, had sent the looted gold to Rome. He called on the Vatican to open its sealed archives. Israel also demanded that the Vatican should appoint independent



Christoph Meili, above, a former Swiss bank security guard, was locked out of the conference. Mr Meili, 29, received threats in his homeland after revealing the contents of confidential documents which allegedly showed the Union Bank of Switzerland's links to property seized by the Nazis. He was subsequently granted asylum in the United States.

researchers and examine all its documents on Jewish victims.

The spotlight yesterday continued to fall on Switzerland, by far the largest conduit for Nazi gold. The Swiss National Bank issued an extraordinary apology for its wartime behaviour.

Admitting that it bought some 279 tonnes of gold from Germany, Italy and Japan during the war, the bank insisted its main objectives had been to stabilise the Swiss franc and prevent a collapse of the country's financial system. But it added: "The SNB finds it difficult to understand why its management of the time did not sufficiently take into account the moral and political implications of their strategy of free convertibility of the Swiss franc in a Europe dominated by Germany."

The bank had been aware of the risk of receiving looted gold. Measures to prevent such acquisitions had been "altogether too half-hearted in the face of these risks".

The bank said it was hard now to judge the decisions outside the historical context. But it admitted that it could not rule out the fact that it had bought, even unwittingly, gold originating from concentration camps.

Britain revealed that there was heated argument in the War Cabinet over whether all gold, including that taken from victims, should be put in the pool to be distributed in reparations. Sir John Anderson, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, argued for this, but the Treasury raised moral objections. It would be unacceptable to European allies and contrary to the principle that reparation should not be made from goods taken from the recipients in the first place.

"If we extend the doctrine to cover gold plainly seen, before all the world, to be theirs, it will seem nothing less than banditry to them," the Treasury said.

But the paper says that in subsequent discussions with the French and Americans, British objections were overruled.



Gisella Weishauss outside Lancaster House — "no one in there speaks for me"

Survivor seeking family fortune left out in cold

BY ADRIAN LEE

CLAIMANT

AN ELDERLY survivor of the Holocaust who claims her family's wealth was looted by the Germans was refused entry to the Nazi gold conference yesterday.

Gisella Weishauss, the only member of a family of nine to escape, spent the day huddled against the cold outside Lancaster House in London, as delegates from more than 40 nations discussed how people like her should be compensated.

Mrs Weishauss, 68, was told the conference hall was full. She had flown to London from her home in New York on Tuesday, hoping to be allowed to make an address to delegates.

Her parents, Eugene and Sara, three brothers and three sisters died at Auschwitz. In all, 55 of her relatives died in the Holocaust.

"Nobody in there speaks for me," said Mrs Weishauss, who claims that her father, a currency dealer, deposited gold and money in the Union Bank of Switzerland shortly before the occupation of Transylvania, then part of Hungary.

His name did not appear when the Swiss published a list of dormant accounts held by Jews and she is claiming damages through the American courts.

"Our money is being debated and I have a right to know what is going on," she said yesterday.

Mrs Weishauss was 14 when her family were round-

ed up at their middle-class home in the town of Sighet. At Auschwitz her parents, brothers and sisters were told to form a line on the left. She was deemed fit to work and told to stand on the right.

"I later found out that all those on the left were taken to the crematoriums."

"I've always asked myself why it was only me who survived. Even after the war I always dreamt that my family would come home, because they had all been healthy, but I never saw any of them again."

After two months at the concentration camp, Mrs Weishauss became a slave labourer, working with other Jewish women to build an oil refinery in Germany. At one stage it was bombed by the Allies and 150 women died.

Mrs Weishauss later worked in a munitions factory before the Russians liberated her on the Czech border. She emigrated to the United States in 1950, with her husband, and worked as a seamstress to help support their family.

Accompanied by her lawyer Ed Fagan, who is representing 23,000 other people with claims and who was also denied entry, she said of the conference: "Maybe it is a good thing but not for me standing outside."

But, she would not leave. Mr Fagan said: "Mrs Weishauss has endured a lot more in her life than a cold winter's day in London."

PoW money 'kept from war machine'

By Peter Capella

JAPAN

A COMPLEX web of financial dealings between Switzerland and Japan prevented millions of Swiss francs of Allied money paid to help prisoners of war from being used to fuel the Japanese war machine. Swiss officials attending the London conference yesterday rejected reports of impropriety in Switzerland's role as a protecting power during the Second World War.

In a detailed study of Tokyo and Bern's wartime economic exchanges, *Good Offices and Good Business*, Michel Coduri, a Swiss historian, admits that Switzerland did derive substantial advantages by using its status as a protecting power to obtain

repayment of Swiss debts from 1942. But the Allies liked the scheme because it limited and delayed the amount of Swiss francs, the only currency internationally acceptable at the time for arms and raw materials purchases, that would fall into enemy hands.

"As a result the Allies were not placed in the position of financing the Japanese war effort to help their nationals," Mr Coduri says. Britain and the United States were in effect paying Japan through Switzerland for care and supplies provided to prisoners of war. The study estimates that the scheme stopped Tokyo obtaining at

least 36 million Swiss francs of exchangeable currency at the time, equivalent to about £142 million today. It indicates that Allied funds were not diverted from helping up to 200,000 British, American and Dutch prisoners in Japanese-occupied Asia. But the mandate was complicated because Tokyo did not accept the Geneva Conventions.

From 1942 the Allies transferred gold to the Swiss in a blocked deposit in Canada that could only be touched after the war. The funds were then used by the Swiss to pay Japan for supplies and care for Allied prisoners in the Far East. But instead of receiving direct transfers of Swiss francs Tokyo accepted payment in the form of a

waiver on the equivalent amount of debts owed to Swiss creditors.

In 1943, however, Japan began to impose prohibitive exchange rates in areas under its control to obtain at least seven times more Swiss francs than the market rate would allow.

It also demanded direct transfers from Switzerland, forcing a compromise clearing agreement by August 1944. Two thirds of the funds were provided by Britain.

The Swiss claims that the clearing arrangement helped the Allies to halve the losses imposed by exchange controls and rampant inflation in the Far East, although Swiss creditors did obtain about 4.7 million Swiss francs at the time.

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خدمات الأعمال



Ezra Pound salutes Italy on his return in 1958

Pound was 'sane and unashamed' Fascist to last

The pro-Fascist "confession" made by the great American poet Ezra Pound at the end of the Second World War has been published for the first time, depicting in clear terms his unrepentant hatred of America's wartime leaders and fervent admiration for Benito Mussolini, the Italian Fascist dictator.

Confession shows poet unrepentant

Richard Owen writes

In the statement, Pound, one of the giants of 20th-century literature, accused President Roosevelt and the "international financiers who backed him" of dragging the US into the war. Ironically, in view of his own subsequent incarceration in an asylum, the poet described Roosevelt as a suitable case for psychiatric treatment. He said he found the British Empire "disgusting" and believed Britain and the US had mistakenly opposed Fascism because they were in the hands of "a conspiracy of bankers". But he believed he had "never done anything to harm" his native country.

Born in Idaho, Pound spent most of his life in Italy, settling in Rapallo in 1924. He made hundreds of radio broadcasts for the Mussolini regime. Arrested by US forces as Nazism and Fascism crumbled, he was imprisoned in a camp at Pisa until his health deteriorated and he was transferred to a prison hospital.

He told his interrogators that he fully expected to be tried in America for treason, but in fact he was declared "insane and mentally unfit for trial". He spent 12 years in a psychiatric hospital in

Washington, and returned to Italy in 1958, dying in Venice in 1972.

Yet apart from occasional confusion over dates, the "confession" — published in *L'Espresso* magazine — shows no sign of insanity. Instead it shows that Pound gave a lucid and cogent account of his services to Italian Fascism in a calm and defiant tone.

His "confession", consisting of six closely-typed pages dated May 7, 1945, was made in Genoa to Ramon Arrizabalaga, of the Counter Intelligence Corps, the counter-espionage arm of the US Army, and Frank L. Amprim, of the FBI.

In it Pound said he did not regret comparing Mussolini to Thomas Jefferson in 1935, or offering in 1940 to broadcast in English on Mussolini's "great and important work". He broadcast for three years for both Rome and Berlin, until Mussolini's overthrow. Mary De Rachewitz, Pound's daughter, who still lives in Italy, said the "confession" showed that her father had been "extremely candid" but also that he "never felt he was at fault".

Shin Bet in celebrity killing alert

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

SHIN BET, Israel's equivalent of MI5, is to review security vetting procedures after the Prime Minister's former hairdresser was found shot dead.

David Afuta, 38, the celebrity hairdresser and his 23-year-old girlfriend Anat Elimelech, one of Israel's top models, were found dead in their flat in one of Jerusalem's smartest districts on Tuesday. He had two bullet holes in his chest fired from his licensed Springfield .45 handgun. Ms Elimelech had one similar wound.

"This is clearly a case of murder-suicide, but it is not clear who did the shooting," said Yair Yitzhaki, police commander of the Jerusalem district. Yesterday, after post-mortem examinations, Israel Radio reported "the initial conclusion is that she shot him then shot herself".

Until two weeks ago, Mr Afuta was one of the most regular visitors to the heavily guarded residence of Benjamin Netanyahu where he cut the hair of Prime Minister and his wife Sara, as well as their two young children.

"He said it was too hard for him to pick up every day and go and give them a haircut," said Isaac Nahemias, a close friend of the couple, explaining why Mr Afuta had given up the job. "Also, he was having problems with Anat."

The Tel Aviv daily *Haaretz* reported that Shin Bet, which has mounted one of the world's tightest VIP protection operations around successive Israeli Prime Ministers since the assassination of Yitzhak



David Afuta, the Israeli Prime Minister's former hairdresser, and Anat Elimelech who were found shot dead at home

Rabin in 1995, planned to investigate whether it had erred in allowing Mr Afuta such unfettered access.

Both Mr Netanyahu and his wife expressed shock at the bizarre deaths which for 24 hours dominated an Israeli press, TV and radio normally preoccupied with military or terrorist rather than domestic violence.

"I am absolutely stunned and shocked," Mrs Netan-

yahu said. "I still cannot believe that this tragedy happened. I think that disagreement, of all types, should be solved through discussion... David was a good hairdresser, a very pleasant and nice man who loved life. He had two kids and this is simply an awful tragedy."

Family and friends said that the couple, who had been together for six years, had recently been going through a

difficult patch after Mr Afuta's wife refused to give him a divorce. Recently, Ms Elimelech was reported to have said that she would leave him.

Yediot Aharonot, Israel's biggest-selling paper, reported that Aryeh Schneidshar, a lawyer friend of the Elimelech family, said that three weeks ago her father told him that Mr Afuta had threatened her after she told him that she intended to break off their

relationship. "Schneidshar, a former high-ranking police officer recommended to the father that he file a police complaint, but he decided against it," the newspaper added.

As Ms Elimelech was buried at an emotional funeral in Jerusalem yesterday, *Yediot* reported in its front-page story that police feared the couple had taken the secret to their graves.

Israeli strikers ordered to work

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER

ISRAEL'S Labour Court last night ordered more than 700,000 strikers back to work after a nationwide stoppage that brought much of the country to a halt.

The "open-ended" general strike, which began yesterday morning, was the latest in a series of clashes between the Labour Party-affiliated unions and the Netanyahu Government.

It sprang from union anger at an off-the-cuff remark by Yitzhak Nechman, the Finance Minister and a close confidant of the Prime Minister, in which trade unionists were apparently referred to as "enemies within". The Minister's remark was prompted by a smaller strike by 150,000 on Sunday and an ongoing row with the unions about pension rights.

The strike closed air and sea ports, the Tel Aviv stock exchange, post offices, weapons factories, local authorities, government offices, railways and banks. Many health and social services were put on emergency footing. The main Bezeq telephone company shut down information and repair services, and the Israel Electric Corporation carried out emergency repairs only.

New Michelin man treads lightly

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE chubby Michelin man has slipped down his spare tyres to appeal to weight-conscious Asian consumers.

To coincide with Michelin man's 100th birthday next year, the French tyre and rubber company has decided to cut around 20 per cent off his girth and make him taller.

The "Bibendum" figure first appeared in 1898 in a Michelin advertisement by the French designer O'Galop (Marius Rossillon), which showed the merry tyre-man quaffing nails and shards of broken bottle —

as evidence of his resilience on the road — alongside the Latin phrase from Horace *Nunc est bibendum* (Now is the time to drink).

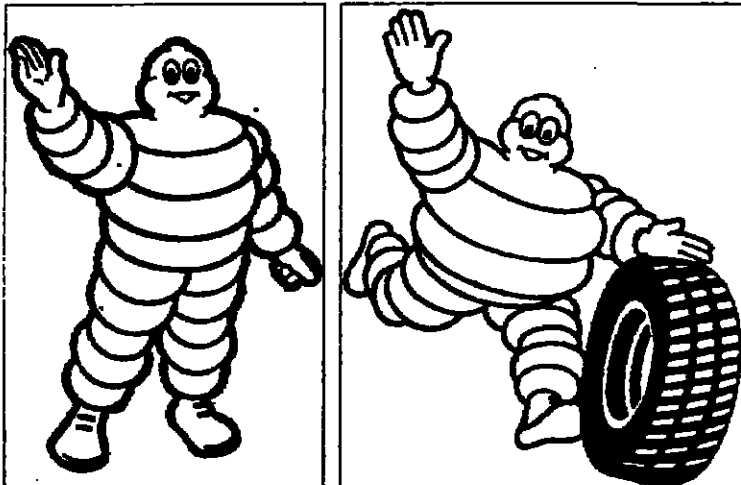
A century later, the French company has not only abandoned Latin and references to drinking in its advertising, but has also decreed that Bibendum is a sight too porky for modern tastes.

The company now wants to project an image of lean efficiency, particularly in Asian countries where, according to *Le Parisien* newspaper, "the public is less liable to obesity (apart from Sumo wrestlers) and where such a tubby figure was proving hard to sell".

"Thinner and smiling, Bibendum will look like the leader he is, with an open and reassuring manner," the company said in a statement.

The deflated Michelin man also appears less energetic. Where the older, fatter Bibendum was usually pictured running behind a tyre, the new version, created by designers Carré Noir, is standing still and waving.

In a sign of how keen the company is to preserve its new-found figure, the slimmer Bibendum will even appear on the Michelin restaurant guide, France's celebrated food bible that may, more than any other book, have helped to make people fatter.



The leaner new Michelin man, left, and his tubbier predecessor

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Tim Rayment on the assignment that became a real-life cliffhanger. This weekend in The Sunday Times Magazine

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Bad manners and high prices hit tourist trade

AS Hong Kong's hysteria about the plunging stock-market temporarily fades, what remains is a longer-lasting financial crisis over tourism — caused partly by rudeness.

Pierre-Alexis Dumas, the regional manager and son of the chairman of Hermès, the luxury silk shop chain, says one of the reasons for the fall in tourism, which is down almost 20 per cent from the same period last year, is that the Japanese are staying away, partly because shopkeepers are so unpleasant.

When Tung Chee-hwa, the Chief Executive, went to Japan recently, attention focused on a newspaper claim that Japanese tourists in Hong Kong were being charged double. This was officially denied by the Tourist Association, but it soon admitted that "rogue" agencies and some shops were fleecing Japanese travellers, who are notoriously too shy to

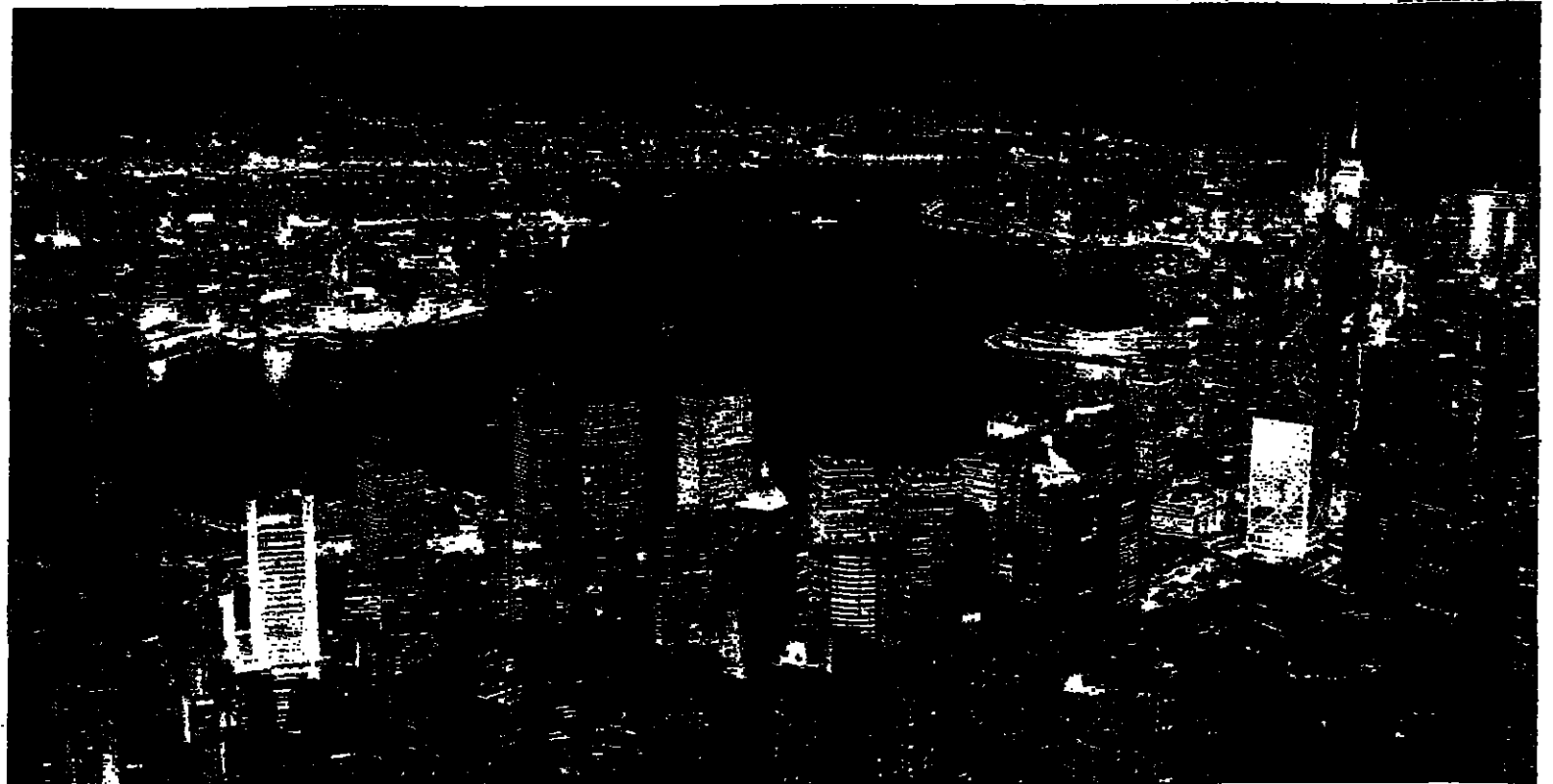
Hong Kong is paying for its Cantonese ways
Jonathan Mirsky writes

bargain. Desperate airlines are now offering three-day packages to Hong Kong at bargain prices, while others have slashed their round-trip fares. But this is a short-term palliative. Chic shops have been holding sales long before Christmas; expensive restaurants are easy to book; the famous 24-hour tailors sit glumly over their bolts of cloth, and taxi drivers are snarling more than ever. The drivers are a good place to start looking for an explanation for the shortage of tour-

ists. They speak no foreign languages, carry no maps, and "will" often overcharge unless they fear the passenger is a plainclothes policeman. The taxi queue at the airport is a nightmare of confusion and desperate passengers.

Hotels are very expensive and are now — the high season — 20 to 40 per cent empty. The three YMCAs are cheap at almost £100 a night. Many of the five-star hotels are flashy but short on personal service, and with business and communications centres whose staff speak poor English.

Nothing that a tourist might want is cheap — certainly nothing worth the long flight. It is cheaper for expatriates to buy from American mail-order catalogues than to buy locally. If high fashion is the target, a flight to Paris or Milan and a big buying spree would be cheaper than buying at the same outlets here.



Hong Kong relies on visitors, but Japanese trippers have been overcharged and it is often cheaper to buy from mail-order firms in America.

Fashionable shoes in Paris are half the Hong Kong price. The famous harbour is a sewer in which 20 years ago it was safe to swim, and the beaches officially termed "clean" meet the standard only because the rest are filthy. The harbour is being rapidly narrowed for high-rise

buildings. It is hard to think of another city whose central amenity has been so deliberately despoiled.

Hong Kong's skies are usually grey, mainly because of pollution, and many a child has never seen a star. Rates of child asthma are among the highest in the world and

residents who hack like confirmed smokers discover their coughs vanish the day they arrive in another country and their lungs turn pink.

Hong Kong's New Territories have miles of countryside designated an inviolable civic treasure. These "country parks" are criss-crossed by

trails. Although still splendid for a day out, like the harbour, they are also being ruined. Where villages — now deserted by farmers who have moved to the city or abroad — once enlivened the scene with their paddies, gardens and orchards, there are vast stretches of scrapyards, featuring crushed cars and trucks piled on top of each other.

Hong Kongers love to have picnics; they also leave behind their roasting forks and heaps of plastic cups and plates.

Hong Kong is a Cantonese city, and Cantonese are used to living and working in

cramped and crowded conditions. They give no mercy to each other and are no more courteous to tourists.

The Tourist Association is now a target for those who poke fun at its most recent slogan, "Wonders Never Cease". It is seeking something with which to tempt foreign travellers, who are among the most valuable dollar-earners here.

In a new brochure, it provides a map of about 40 walks between so-called historic sites. At least a third are already marked "demolished".

Hong Kong wins top marks from Britain

Beijing: Britain yesterday gave its first official "report card" on China's handling of Hong Kong since the July 1 handover and, despite the fact that the former colony no longer has its own elected legislature, awarded Beijing an "A" (James Fringie writes). "It has all gone very smoothly," said Alan Paul, the British Ambassador, who is the new chief representative of the British side on the Joint Liaison Group (JLG), the Sino-British body that reviews issues relating to Hong

Kong. It was the first plenary meeting of the group — a powerless but prestigious advisory body — since the transfer of sovereignty and the formation of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China. "I think the SAR has got off to a very good start," Mr Paul said.

The improved mood, in stark contrast to the last days of the colonial era, seems to reflect the Labour Government's desire to maintain smooth Sino-British relations.

Sharif consolidates grip on power by ousting top judge

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN'S Chief Justice was ousted yesterday, completing a sweep of power by Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister, now the most powerful elected leader in the nation's history. There are fears that he will abuse his position, threatening future conflict in a divided country.

The old ruling trika — the President, Prime Minister and army — is in abeyance now that Mr Sharif is, for the time being, the unassailable leader of the Islamic state. The judiciary poses no immediate threat unless Alnasir Khan, the new Chief Justice, seeks to emulate his predecessor — Sajjad Ali Shah — by resurrecting old corruption charges against Mr Sharif, one of the richest men in South Asia.

That seems unlikely: the Supreme Court, humiliated and divided, has lost its sting after Mr Sharif's victory over the Chief Justice, who actively pursued corruption cases against the Prime Minister. Mr Sharif, a former Punjab chief minister who made his fortune through politics, is far stronger than his strongest predecessor, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was hanged by the military for assuming too much power.

The acting President, Wasim Sajjad, chairman of the Senate, is associated with Mr

Sharif's Muslim League and thus poses no threat. He will remain in office until a new President is elected next year by MPs and members of provincial assemblies. The incumbent will in effect be picked by Mr Sharif.

The case of contempt of court against Mr Sharif, who publicly insulted the former Chief Justice, has been permanently dropped now the ousted judge is out.

Parliament is no more a threat to Mr Sharif than is the presidency or the judiciary: the Prime Minister virtually annihilated Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party in the February election and is in a position to ensure that her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, remains in jail on a string of criminal charges.

□ Delhi: India's Cabinet recommended to President Narayanan that Parliament be dissolved, opening the way for a general election in February or March. Sis Ram Ola, the Water Resources Minister, told reporters. (Reuters)

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'I killed for Mummy' says Mandela witness

FROM SAM KILEY
IN JOHANNESBURG

THE former head of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's bodyguard said yesterday that she ordered the killing of several township activists while having an affair with a white policeman of the Special Branch.

Jerry Richardson, 48, who is serving a life sentence for the murder of Stompie Moeketsi Seipei, 14, said he had killed the boy in 1988 on the orders of Mrs Mandela. He "slaughtered the boy like a goat" by stabbing him in the neck with the blade from a pair of garden shears. "My hands are full of blood," he added.

Richardson said that Mrs Mandela had ordered the execution of five others who were accused of being police informers after trying to leave the so-called Mandela United Football Club or falling out with her.

Referring to Mrs Mandela throughout the hearing at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Johannesburg yesterday as "Mummy", he said that "she never killed anyone. But she used us to kill a lot of people... she used us."

This contradicted earlier evidence that Mrs Mandela had stabbed the boy herself. Katiza Cebekhulu, returned briefly last week from Britain, where he is in hiding, to testify that he saw Mrs Mandela stab Stompie with a shiny implement.

Asked who Mummy was, Richardson said: "I can't say Mrs

Mandela. I'm used to saying Mummy. He added: "You see I loved Mummy with all my heart. I would have done anything to please her. Now that I have spent so many years in prison and she never came to visit, I have woken up."

Richardson described a torture session during which Stompie was thrown into the air "about seven times" and allowed to crash to the floor while Mrs Mandela attacked other youths with a whip.

Joyce Seipei, the boy's mother, who had sat through hours of evidence on the murder, was over-

come and broke down sobbing. "I do not want to cry, but the things we did as the Mandela Football Club are barbaric," said Richardson wiping away tears.

Mrs Mandela, who had been due to start her evidence yesterday, is expected to begin testifying today.

Richardson said that Stompie's death could have been prevented if three members of the Mandela Crisis Committee, set up during the 1980s to try to restrain Mrs Mandela and her bodyguards, had demanded to see him and three other youths who had been abduct-

ed and were being held in a room at the back of her Soweto mansion.

Last week Frank Chikane, now chief adviser to Thabo Mbeki, the Deputy President, and Sydney Mufamadi, the Minister for Safety and Security, told the commission that they had visited Mrs Mandela to plead for the release of the youths but had accepted her word that they were in good health.

Giving evidence, Richardson fondled a miniature red and white football. He confessed to having been a police informer himself, and to having "sold out" two members of the ANC's armed wing killed in a shoot-out at his home.

Two other members of the football club, Lolo Sono and Siboniso Sibabala, were blamed for passing on this information and were killed on Mrs Mandela's orders, he said.

Though often rambling and irrelevant, his testimony corroborated evidence by other witnesses.

He also claimed that Mrs Mandela, 63, had a "sexual relationship" with Paul Erasmus, a Special Branch agent. "I saw him coming out of her bedroom in the morning. He was often in her house and they were talking about who was an informer. One time he pointed me out, but Mummy didn't believe him," Richardson said.

Mr Erasmus told the commission last week that he had run a disinformation campaign aimed at discrediting the Mandela family. He has now emerged as a supporter of Mrs Mandela.



Winnie friend adds glitter

THE truth commission hearings have reunited Mrs Madikizela-Mandela with an old friend. Hazel Crane, left, a convicted diamond smuggler who shares her passion for garish clothing and bangles. Mrs Crane sat supportively two rows behind Mrs Mandela and twinkled furiously from diamonds and emeralds at her ears, throat and wrists. Her East European partner, who sat next to her, wore a thick bracelet encrusted with diamonds and matching ring.

Ms Crane, who once bought a Cape Town house for Mrs Mandela's use, was convicted of illicit diamond dealing in 1994.



Jerry Richardson, holding a miniature football, gives evidence

WORLD SUMMARY

Rain lifts fire threat to Sydney

Sydney: Fears of another Australian bushfire disaster were receding last night as cooler weather and occasional rain lifted the threat to the Sydney suburbs and brought temporary relief to the fire-ravaged state of New South Wales (Roger Maynard writes).

However, in conditions described as the worst for 30 years, firefighters were last night still battling fires near Coonabarabran, 250 miles northwest of Sydney where flames destroyed 320,000 acres of bushland.

Rebel shoot-out

Paris: More than 280 Algerians, mostly suspected extremists opposed to the Government, have been killed in clashes between the Islamic Salvation Army and the Armed Islamic Group in the past few days in four areas of Algeria, according to press reports. Among the dead were four members of one family, including a seven-year-old boy, who had their throats cut. (Reuters)

Scales of justice

Cairo: A divorced woman's request for alimony was rejected because an Egyptian court ruled she had effectively driven her husband away by putting on weight and neglecting her appearance, the Al-Akhar daily reported. The husband told an appeal court in Alexandria that his wife's behaviour and appearance drove him into the arms of his secretary. (Reuters)

Mystery death

Miami: An unidentified woman, believed to have fallen from an aircraft, was found dead after striking a garden wall at a block of flats. Nobody saw her fall and police have no idea what happened. "We have no clue," Detective Delrish Moss said, adding that residents had heard a loud bang and went outside to find the woman's body. (AP)

Moro killer on day release

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

ITALIANS expressed outrage yesterday over a decision to grant the Red Brigades terrorist convicted of the murder of Aldo Moro, the former Prime Minister, nearly 20 years ago "semi-liberty", seen as a move toward his release.

La Repubblica said it was questionable whether Mario Moretti, 49, who has served 16 years of a life sentence, should "have the doors opened to a relatively normal life without fully renouncing his revolutionary beliefs or throwing

any further light on the crime." Under a provision for prisoners with a record of good behaviour, he is to work for a pharmaceuticals company, entering sales data on a computer, but will have to return to his cell at night.

Moro's son, Giovanni, said the decision was "further proof that in Italy we pay more attention to those who commit grave crimes than we do to their victims".

Moro was kidnapped on March 16 1978. His bullet-

riddled body was found in the boot of a car in Rome in May. Moretti, who admitted leading the kidnappers and firing the fatal shots, told the prison review panel that he and his fellow terrorists had "paid in full for what we did".

The judges agreed that he had "broken with the past" and had acknowledged "the failure of his ideology and the terrorist structure built upon it". But he did not explain why the gang had targeted Moro, or whether others were involved.

Banda buried with emblems

Harare: Nearly 100,000 Malawians bid a restrained farewell yesterday to their former President, Dr Hastings Banda (Jan Raath writes).

His airtight £23,000 coffin was lowered amid soft keening by women into a nine-ft-deep grave at Capital Hill in the capital, Lilongwe, after an eight-hour state funeral. Interred with him were his trademark lion tail fly whisk, black Homburg hat and pinstriped suits. He died in Johannesburg last week, aged 99.

Reno decision under attack

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

REPUBLICANS yesterday hailed Louis Freeh, the FBI Director, as a hero for his formal objection to the decision of Janet Reno, the Attorney-General, not to appoint an independent counsel to investigate allegations that the White House broke fund-raising laws.

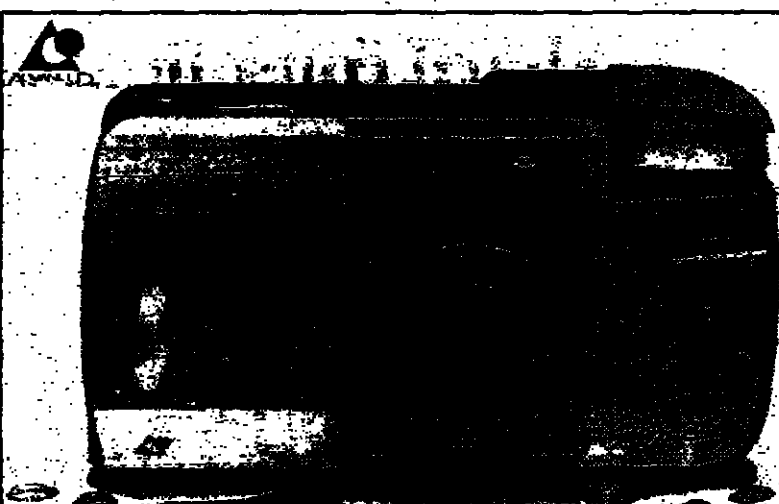
Vowing that Ms Reno's decision on Tuesday would not mean the end to inquiries into the murky of the 1996 election campaign, congressional Republicans said they

would try to use Mr Freeh's stance as a tool to challenge Ms Reno's decision.

Dan Burton, a Republican congressman from Indiana, said he would call Mr Freeh and Ms Reno before the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee for a hearing next week. "The question," he said, "is will the American people have confidence that no cover-up is going on? The answer remains No".

Mr Freeh argued that President Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore engaged in a conspiracy to evade the campaign finance rules, and that this could be appreciated only by examining the whole campaign, not just individual allegations as Ms Reno had done.

But he credited her with "honesty and integrity". Mr Clinton stuck to a carefully terse single sentence: "The Attorney-General made her decision based on a careful review of the law and the facts, and that's as it should be".



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Weight for it: recent research has shown that baby girls who are underweight at birth may grow into buxom adolescents, which can lead to eating disorders or casual promiscuity

Thin baby, fat adult?

AN increasing number of studies has shown that there is a link between birth weight and the later development of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Babies who are under-nourished in the uterus and thin at birth are more likely to develop heart disease and diabetes in adult life.

Recent research has also shown that small baby girls, who are underweight at birth, may grow into particularly buxom adolescents, a time when pubescent fat may cause lasting psychological damage, particularly if adverse comments are made by parents, teachers or friends.

A retrospective study of 200 adolescent girls in America has been reported in the archives of diseases of children and in GP magazine. The research has shown that the fattest girls aged between 14 and 16 were the smallest at birth. This applied particularly to those adolescent girls in whom the excess weight was carried around their abdomen.

Being overweight at a time of such emotional turmoil and sensitivity may be of great importance because there is evidence that low self-esteem induced by a podgy adolescence and critical comment may later lead to eating disorders or to casual promiscuity.

Your personal heart unit

Television programmes *Casualty* and *ER* would lack some of their drama if patients didn't occasionally suffer from cardiac arrest. This potential disaster makes excellent television as the person treated with the defibrillator is, after a few convulsive shocks, restored to life to the satisfaction of the staff and the tearful gratitude of relatives.

A 65-year-old continental banker came to see me last week. Earlier in the year he had developed unstable angina, often a prelude to a heart attack, and had needed an immediate bypass. The patient made a good recovery but a few months later, when having a routine exercise ECG, sustained cardiac arrest. The unit where he was being

treated was well equipped for emergencies. He was defibrillated and admitted to intensive care. Unfortunately, while unconscious, he had inhaled his stomach contents and developed a severe, almost fatal, inhalation pneumonia.

The banker's question to me was a simple one: "Is everything possible being done to prevent me from having another heart attack? If it is, am I likely to suffer cardiac arrest again?" The pills he had been prescribed showed that he was taking the standard medicines to lessen the likelihood of developing the type of arrhythmia, which can be the precursor of cardiac arrest.

The banker's visit happened to coincide with a report in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, showing that there is

Dr Thomas Stuttaford reports on cardiac arrest, birth weight, the benefits of walking, and identifying corpses



now more that can be done for patients like him. The National Institute of Health in the United States has conducted a survey comparing people who were treated with drugs to prevent failure arrhythmias with those who were given an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD).

The implant defibrillator is a miniature edition of the one seen on television, which may be implanted into the chest wall, like a pacemaker. If the heart starts to beat too rapidly

and irregularly, it leaps into action and shocks the heart's rhythm back to normal. The patient barely knows that anything untoward has happened, but the potential lethal arrhythmia is corrected and the life is saved. American reports shows that after one year there is a 38 per cent reduction in deaths in those patients who relied on the defibrillator rather than pills, and after three years there has been a 25 per cent reduction. Having an implanted cardiac

defibrillator is akin to having the emergency room team with you constantly, ready for action.

The ICDs were introduced more than 10 years ago, and 1,500 people in the UK now have them. Modern defibrillators are very small, about the size of a credit card only one-and-a-half centimetres thick and five ounces in weight.

Unlike earlier models, which needed to be fitted inside the chest, the latest ICDs are implanted under the skin or sometimes under one of the muscles in the upper chest.

Titanium leads go from the ICD through the chest wall into the right ventricle. A battery now lasts for nine years, during which time the ICD is constantly monitoring the heart, ready to deal with an emergency.

The role of the ICD has been compared to that of a seatbelt: it lies across one's chest inert and painless until there is an emergency, when it springs to life and prevents disaster. Patients who have shown signs that they may have

dangerous arrhythmias, or have actually arrested in the past, should never be discharged until the cause of the disturbance has been found and, if possible, eradicated with surgery. In an advanced medical unit, the potential arrhythmic heart is now stimulated so that the threshold at which trouble may arise can be judged and the need for an ICD assessed.

Dr D.W. Davies, consultant cardiologist at St Mary's Hospital, London, says: "The American study shows very clearly that for many patients ICD therapy should be the initial treatment of choice."

The cost is considerable, about £20,000-£30,000. The question which my banker friend, and the other 100,000 people likely to suffer cardiac arrest each year will have to answer is whether they would rather have a smart car or the equivalent of a medical emergency team always at hand by their chest, alert and ready to keep them alive and active, whether they are at their office desk, on the golf course, swimming or at home.

Exercise myth falls short

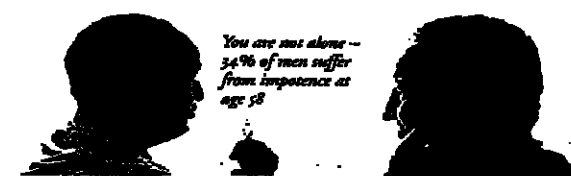
THE brisk walk has become so well accepted as the preferred exercise these days that no one has previously dared to question any aspect of its efficacy.

There is still no evidence to refute the belief that a brisk daily walk of 20 to 30 minutes, with the pace fast enough to make conversation difficult but not impossible, is other than excellent for the heart and cardiovascular system and capable of reducing the incidence of later onset diabetes.

However, a recent survey in age and ageing compared the convalescence of 165 post-menopausal women who had

suffered a fractured arm. Those who had been selected randomly to walk at an ever-increasing brisk pace for the approved time ended their convalescence with better bone density than those who had been given alternative exercises which could not have affected the bones.

Unfortunately, so many of the brisk walkers fell while taking their daily exercise — 30 per cent more than non-walkers — that any small advantage achieved in bone density would have been more than nullified by the injuries which had been, or could have been sustained by falling.



What my older, wiser brother said about "IMPOTENCE"

People who suffer from it get fed up. Just thinking about it makes it worse. And many prescribed drugs have adverse effects. But there are qualified people who now specialise in

treating this embarrassing condition *painlessly*. I found them, he said, at The Medical Centre in Weymouth Street, London W1N 3BA. Call them on 0171 637 2018, now!

A positive ID is not so easy

THE tragedy suffered by the Turner family who lost members from three generations in the Luxor massacre has been compounded by the failure to identify their bodies.

The situation is different when a British aircraft crashes in some far-off part of the world. In these circumstances a team skilled in identification, recruited from a large undertaking firm, does much of the routine work. These teams are on 24-hour standby.

After a disaster of this sort the investigators have three main goals. First, they have to achieve complete accuracy when attributing names to the bodies. Secondly, they have to work as quickly as possible as any delay increases the relatives' grief. Thirdly, they must make every effort not to increase the disfigurement which any existing injuries may have already inflicted.

The task is not only unpleasant, it is also extremely difficult. The common belief that dental records always provide the definitive answer is an oversimplification. Only 1 per cent of people at any one time have dental charts that match their mouth in every respect. Mistakes when compiling dental records are also common.

The confusion is increased as patients tend to move from dentist to dentist and many have emergency treatment when away from home or even abroad. These changes will not have been entered on the chart. A survey has shown that the first dental record brought to a mortuary is adequate in only 50 per cent of cases. Finding older, as well as more recent, records can help.

Fingerprinting is useful. Some years ago one of the porters at the Reform Club in London, who lived and worked under an alias, was badly burnt but fortunately he could be recognised, eventually, by his fingerprints. He had

been in the Army and once his real name had been established, his family could be traced.

For the identification of those bodies where the fingerprints are not already on file, they can be lifted from some intimate household appliance, such as a hairbrush.

Many immediate identifications are made by clothing, but this can be extremely inaccurate. In one recent case the five different people who had been with the deceased person just before death, and who needed identification, gave five different descriptions

of the clothes the person was wearing at the time.

Jewellery is helpful, but there have been unfortunate incidents in which mistakes have been made after watches have been borrowed, sold and replaced without relatives knowing. The experts are always concerned about visual identification. This is very much less accurate than is supposed, particularly if the body has been badly damaged. Corroboration is needed, preferably by fingerprints and dental charts.

DNA testing is accurate, but takes time, and for obvious reasons matching with the mother has to be the method of choice.

Paul Knapman, the Westminster Coroner, says: "I have not had to deal with any of the victims of the Luxor massacre. The care, however, of 50,000 bodies has been my responsibility since I took up this appointment, and in some cases the identification has been extremely difficult, but we are not aware that we have made any false attributions."

Dr Knapman added that the role of the coroner in these cases is a judicial one. Most coroners are lawyers rather than doctors, as he is, and they are called on to determine the cause of death after listening to the advice of expert witnesses.



Karina Turner: lost



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Standing up for single mothers

Freezing payments for single parents places a huge burden on them, says lone mother Alison Miller

Last Saturday I found myself rummaging around my knicker drawer in the hope of finding £12. I wanted to see *The Rover's Progress* at the church hall in Hampstead. Couldn't find the plastic and the benefit cheque hadn't arrived. Eldest son was miserable, bruised after defeat on the rugby field. Younger son miserable too after receiving wrong advent calendar (not the Mars bar one). Another day in the life of a single parent.

This week has been worse. On Tuesday the scolding hand of Harriet Harman descended when I learnt of her decision to freeze payments for existing single parents. And, with the debate inspired by her crusade to drive us out to work, came the realisation that friends who had previously accepted my somewhat eccentric circumstances were changing their tune. By living on income support and housing benefit when I could "perfectly well" be working, I was a bleeder, they said. "When are you going to let them spend my tax on something more sensible?" asked one friend. I had become socially unacceptable.

What is worse, it seems, is that I do not meet the stereotype of the single parent. You, the taxpayers, are supporting an intelligent, capable, middle class woman who has chosen to live without male support and, apparently, to milk the system to her advantage for six years.

My sons were six and three when my husband and I parted. The marriage didn't end because I wanted a good life on benefit, it ended for all the reasons marriages end, and it never crossed my mind that I might not be able to manage. I was a journalist and, I cheerfully assumed, I would carry on working, employ a nanny and maintain a good relationship with my sons' father.

Then, six years ago, I gave up work. By carrying on, it seemed to me, I was risking the loss of something invaluably precious — the experience of attachment between a mother and child. If I continued to alienate myself from that experience by putting work before my sons, my children could "lose" both their parents. They



Alison Miller: "Friends who had previously accepted my somewhat eccentric circumstances were changing their tune"

had no right to my time and I was not prepared to accept that, we would all miss out.

I started with some advantages. I was a sitting legend. I was able to borrow against a savings policy my accountant had introduced to me. Thus, as I looked for a new social security adviser, it would not be for ever. When the insurance policy matured it would pay off my debts and give me possibly too much money to be supported by the State. I resolved to take advantage

of the position in which I found myself. I had left school with two O levels and by-passed university. Now, determined not to have my sons mock me later, I was entitled to a mandatory grant for a first degree. I qualified for housing benefit and became accustomed to a term-long regularity which more or less fitted in with school holidays. I discovered there was a way into prep school education for my sons if they turned out to have voices. Sam obliged me by getting a place in the choir of the Temple Church, which substantially funded his place at St Paul's Cathedral Choir School, and my landlords, an educational charity, made up the balance.

Three years later my younger son, Jack, steadfastly refused to budge from the non-earning choristership he had at Southwark Cathedral. I persuaded my mother to underwrite a year's fees at St Paul's, gambling that he would come through. He got a place as a probationer in the first term and she kept her money.

Eventually the insurance policy matured. It paid off many thousands of pounds worth of debts and left me enough cash to buy a car. I now had a BSc in anthropology from Goldsmiths and returned to work as a sub editor. That knackered my back and shoulders so I opted for an MSc at University College. A lover's loan paid the fees and I was once more able to claim benefit, this despite the fact that the boys were boarding.

Happily their school is a remarkable, means-tested and coeducational establishment and I pay no fees.

I am grateful to the State and to many others who have played a part in our survival. We take what comes our way. Where once I was a two O-level school-leaver, I am now a 40-something graduate with two degrees. I am an unpaid director of a south London charity, working with families that society prefers to forget.

But while I take pleasure in these accomplishments, they don't add up to a row of beans in the great global scheme of things. Or do they? During the course of the Harman debate, my greatest concern has been that we seem to have forgotten the M word — mothering. It is unfashionably gender specific, I know, but central to the way we develop and invest in the future of society.

Perhaps governing is more difficult if a relationship between people — mother and child — has to be seen as a process which needs nurture. Call it lone parenting — as people did this week — and we can perpetuate the fantasy that relationships are commodities. They are not: surely it is fundamental that relationships can neither be bought nor sold?

Is it rational to attack the £340 a month income support, £316 housing benefit and £103 child and lone parent benefit that I receive? We have never resorted to any illegal activity

— is the fact that my father pays the television rental a problem? Am I despicable because my mother will put her name to loan agreements on my behalf should I need her to do so? Is the fact that I have a supportive network of family and friends really worth attacking? Or is something else going on?

I think we need to pause, reflect, and look for the answer in our own experience. We were all once dependent infants whose survival rested with our mothers. This week, male and female politicians united to attack lone mothers by taking away their goodies. Somehow lone parents invite envy, perhaps because, as mothers, we have an innate ability to survive attacks.

Will our experience of mothering be benefited by after school clubs? Yes, if we are middle class and can save on the nanny. But what about the people I know, for whom mothering can be such an overwhelming demand that there is no space for them to reflect or think about a life for themselves?

Surely we must allow single mothers the time and space they need to nurture their children? It is not a permanent state. Indeed, if I accept payment for this article, it could end my claim to benefit at a single swipe. Taking the money would also mean that Harriet Harman had won. Then I will need a job lucrative enough to pay the £22,000 or so it would cost to pay the full fees for my sons' school each year. What would you do?

A kiss is just a kiss

For men, it's just a prelude but for women... Joe Joseph on the hit and miss art of the kiss

Not since Judas betrayed Jesus by kissing him in the Garden of Gethsemane in Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* has such a big Hollywood star been so betrayed by a kiss as Harrison Ford has just been by Helen Mirren. She squealed this week that Ford, her co-star in *The Mosquito Coast*, was "the sweetest guy... But he can't kiss. He finds it impossible to kiss on screen. He's probably not very good off-screen, either."

Now, kissing strangers can be daunting. Kissing a woman for the first time is like getting into an unfamiliar rental car. You turn on the ignition and flick one of the stalks on the steering column to turn on the headlights and — whoosh! — the wipers come on. Maybe you should put on the fog-lights, just to be safe.

Lots of things rush through your mind when you kiss a new woman, because kissing is like a shop window on sex: a chance to look before you get into debt. OK, so now you're kissing her... Is she kissing you back? Or only letting you kiss her? Sometimes she will actually take the initiative. (A tip: you can usually tell if the woman is taking the initiative if it is she who asks you to go

— although not, of course, if you're both in the same room at the time and she's planning to stay there.)

What if she catches you with your eyes open — or worse with only one eye open, making you look like a winking weirdo? Worse, what if it's her eyes that are open. Moustaches, naturally, can be offputting (although if she has a sweet personality that often compensates). And when you're necking with a girl from somewhere in America's Deep South, it is always disconcerting if she suddenly confides in you that you kiss just like her big brother. And her uncle.

And how far do you go? Until she tells you to stop. That's why many men find that the four most disconcerting words in the English

language are not "I'm afraid it's terminal", but "Can't we just kiss?"

You see, the difference between men and women is that, for men, kissing is on the way to somewhere else. It's not the destination. Not that women don't want to go to the same destination, just that every now and then — without meaning anything untoward — they'll say the sexual equivalent of "Hey, this is a nice traffic light we've stopped at. Let's just pull over here and let the car idle for a while." Men don't much care for stopping at lights. Women know that the destination will still be there tomorrow; but men, by nature more cautious, like to make sure.

And what if, while you've had your eyes closed all these years, kissing fashions have changed? Maybe French kissing is now passé and German kissing is all the rage? Does German kissing involve taking regular breaks for a bratwurst sandwich? What fun will be left us when European Union kissing takes over, and we all give up our right to kiss because various bureaucrats in Brussels will be doing all our kissing for us?

On the other hand, what if you're too good a kisser? Is she thinking: "Hey, this guy seems pretty experienced. I'm probably just another notch on his belt." So you see, it takes a lot of practice to be so good a kisser that people can't tell how good you actually are. But wait: what if she's too good a kisser. Are you grateful? Or just suspicious?

Anyway, what about Helen Mirren? Is she a good kisser? "Of course," her partner, Taylor Hackford, said yesterday. "What else could I say?"

But listen, Harrison, there's a way out. One of Britain's leading anthropologists told me yesterday that kissing is a very Western habit. In most of Africa, there is simply no tradition of kissing. It's just not part of the culture. They're not that big on foreplay, either. Maybe it's time to remake *The African Queen*.



Kissing: so common, so difficult

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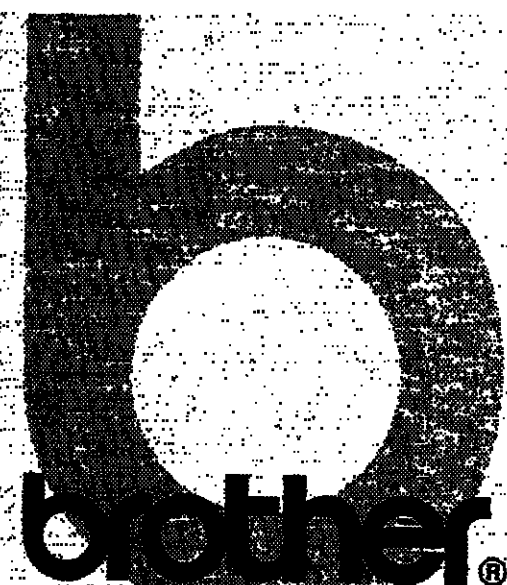
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Facing up to a climate of change

Tony Blair on the significance of today's Green summit

I can remember the excitement both in politics and among people, particularly the young, when the Rio Earth summit faced up to the growing threat to our environment.

If we are honest, however, much as that summit put environmental issues on the map, a huge amount needs to be done. It has not created the sort of world that we all want. Kyoto must be different, and the Government is doing all that it can to put pressure on countries resistant to tackling global warming.

John Prescott has done an excellent job in focusing the minds of fellow governments on the difficult choices that lie ahead. Today John and I are hosting a "Green summit" in Downing Street with some of the nation's top business people. Some commentators have said that the needs of business and the environment cannot be reconciled — I don't agree. There is a third way. It is vital that business is involved, and it wants to be. Climate change affects us all. If we are to tackle it, everyone must work together. If business is not involved then the targets we sign up to will be empty and meaningless. Kyoto is very much the beginning of the process. It does not end there. It will be up to governments, business and individuals to ensure that any agreement reached leads to real change.

The whole of the British Government is involved. As well as John Prescott, I have invited four other members of the Cabinet — Gordon Brown, Robin Cook, Margaret Beckett and Gavin Strang — to today's meeting with business people, scientists and trade unionists. It is the first time business has got together at such a summit to think through the best options on how to tackle climate change. We have two simple questions to put to them. What can you do to help to combat the threat of climate change? and what can the Government do to assist?

We will also have the opportunity to study a report which will be submitted to me at the meeting by David Davies, chairman of the Government's Advisory Committee on Business and Environment. It concludes that inaction is not an option. The report also says climate change offers opportunities for all business sectors to improve competitiveness and take advantage of the need for improved processes and products. Although the science is far from exact, and it is difficult to estimate the costs of the damage, it is clear that, unchecked, climate change threatens the world's ecosystem and will impose enormous human and business costs.

Global warming could lead to an increase in stormy weather, with low-lying areas of eastern and southern England facing the threat of flooding. To give some idea of that threat, the great storm of 1987 cost our economy about £3 billion at today's prices. That is nothing compared with what could happen if we allow global warming to go unchecked.

At this morning's summit I want to hear practical proposals. There has been too much

talk of the pain involved in cutting greenhouse gases, not enough talk about the gains. Climate change is an international phenomenon, which does not respect national borders. Nations cannot act alone. Many of the businesses represented today are multi-national companies with worldwide interests. They can play a leading role in delivering cuts in greenhouse gases, not only in the UK, but in both the developed and developing worlds.

Among those at the summit will be John Browne, of BP, Dr Chris Fay, of Shell, Sir Colin Marshall of the CBI, Sir Ronald Unwin of ICI, Keith Henry of National Power, Nick Reilly of Vauxhall, and Bill Morris of the T&GWU. They will have ideas about how we can deliver what is agreed at Kyoto, and how we can exploit the opportunities that arise.

The European Union wants to see a 15 per cent reduction in those gases that cause global warming. Yes, it is ambitious; yes, other countries, including America, believe this is too difficult. Yes, developing countries feel it will harm their chances of catching up with the developed economies. But we should see it as an opportunity for business and a means to create jobs. The environmental industry is growing rapidly. At present it is worth in the region of £170 billion, of which the UK share is about £7.5 billion. By the year 2000 it is estimated that the industry will have grown to £203 billion, and by 2010 its value could rise to £388 billion.

The UK has an excellent track record in science and technology. We need to build on this knowledge and expertise to develop new, clean technologies. We need to look at new ways of producing energy. This could involve promoting greater use of solar energy and making more use of renewable sources. This will ensure that the UK delivers what it has signed up to and will help other countries fulfil their commitments.

There is money to be made and there are jobs to be created. To do that we must meet the challenge of Kyoto. Global warming is not going to go away. If we are to make real progress at Kyoto there has to be a partnership between governments and business. We need to develop a common cause, an international crusade to win this battle.

The nations of the world must act. The science is far from perfect; we cannot be precise about what might happen, or the exact timescale, but the clock is running. If we do not act to tackle global warming then we run the risk of leaving a dreadful legacy.

The threat from global warming is already affecting this generation. It will affect our children even more; we cannot even begin to predict how it will affect our children's children. That is why the Kyoto climate change conference is so important. We will do our bit. Other countries must do theirs. So must every individual. We owe it to future generations to make it a success. Anything less would be a betrayal.



Twilight of the Garden

When I was chairman of the Arts Council in the 1980s, the Royal Opera House went through some difficult periods, but nothing like the present. Financially, the worst year in my time was 1985-86, when the Arts Council grant reached a peak of £22 million, measured in constant 1986-87 prices. That was unreasonably high and took money away from less prestigious but equally important arts bodies. In that year, the box office produced only £10.5 million, and sponsorship and donations only £3.6 million. The Arts Council's response was to warn the Royal Opera House that the public subsidy would be tapered downwards, and to encourage the raising of receipts from the box office, as well as from sponsors and donors.

By 1989, the year that I left, this policy had worked rather well. Arts Council funding had been reduced to £19.8 million, a cut of 10 per cent in real terms, which released funds for other work. Box office receipts had risen to £14.6 million, and sponsorship and donations to £7.8 million. In 1985-86, Arts Council grants had exceeded the box office and sponsorship by nearly 60 per cent. By 1988-89 the grant was 10 per cent lower than the total of the box office and sponsorship. In addition, one of Britain's most successful businessmen, Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover, had been appointed chairman by the board and Sir Jeremy Isaacs had been appointed general director. I had not been sure that these two stars would work ideally together, but they seemed to have developed a good working relationship.

Problems from the unions and the need for closure in order to rebuild the house were worrying, but there was reason to think that the new management and the improved financial position would help to overcome them. I had always been conscious of some resentment that the Royal Opera House felt at any outside advice or pressure, but that is common with major arts bodies. The quality of operatic performances was high, and it has remained so in the 1990s.

The report on the Royal Opera House by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee shows that the management in the middle and late 1990s failed disastrously to master the problem of the closure of the house. The committee takes its account of this loss of grip from the minutes of the board in 1995 and

Key figures at the Royal Opera should go — but let us stop this bullying

1996. They were the crucial years. In January 1995 the board was exploring options for alternative venues for 1997, when the closure was actually to take place; they were still doing so in the middle of 1996. When the closure actually happened, the plans, such as they were, proved quite inadequate and financially ruinous. In March 1996, all 170 members of the staff signed a petition expressing concern about the prospects for closure: they were right to be worried.

Two people must bear the greatest responsibility for this failure, the chairman and the general director at the time, Sir Angus Stirling and Sir Jeremy Isaacs. Neither of them can be categorised as an amateur or merely establishment figure.

Indeed, Sir Jeremy Isaacs made his career as an anti-establishment innovator in television. Sir Angus Stirling had been very successful as the chief executive of the National Trust, a £100 million business. Sir Jeremy Isaacs had been successful as the managing director of Channel 4. They should have ensured that a permanent venue would be available during the period of closure; they could have postponed the closure until a satisfactory arrangement had been made. They failed to do either.

Their successors arrived to confront a situation which was already desperate. Lord Chiddingfold succeeded as chairman only in September 1996; Miss Genista McIntosh took over as chief executive in January 1997, and Ms Allen became chief executive only in September 1997, after the house had already closed. The committee puts a large share of the responsibility on Lord Chiddingfold and Ms Allen. That does not seem altogether fair. People who take on desperate situations deserve more support and sympathy in their unenviable task.

However, both of them bore some additional responsibility for the situation in which they found themselves. Ms Allen, before accepting the Royal Opera House post, had been the secretary-general of the Arts Council. In the circumstances, it was probably unwise of her to accept Lord

Chiddingfold's invitation to go over to the Royal Opera House. Lord Chiddingfold had himself been chairman of the Arts Council's lottery panel, before he joined the board of the Opera House, which was shortly before he became chairman.

The committee recommends that the board and the chief executive should resign, and that, if they fail to do so, the Secretary of State should "make clear to the Arts Council that he expects them to cease payments of Grant in Aid to the Royal Opera House". Manifestly, the board has failed to meet the standards one would expect of them. They certainly ought to offer their resignations, and so should the chief executive. I do not, however, at all like the chain of bullying which is implied in the form of the committee's recommendation.

The committee is to bully the Secretary of State; the Secretary of State is to bully the Arts Council; the Arts Council is to bully the board of the Royal Opera House. If arts funding is to be handled in this way, there will be few people willing to accept such unpleasant conditions. One has to remember that all the members of the Arts Council, and all the members of the board of the Royal Opera House, are unpaid volunteers whose reputations are at risk. When they get things wrong, they may have to go, but threats by parliamentary committees are not what they deserve.

The problem is a real one. The old Covent Garden Opera House, though very beautiful, was hopelessly out of date, and it has to be completely rebuilt. Opera is a very highly subsidised art form in most European countries, though less highly subsidised in Britain. It is inherently expensive to produce, particularly the 19th-century operas, with their large choruses and traditionally lavish productions.

Verdi does not come cheap; nor does Wagner. The great singers command star fees, exaggerated by the subsidies of other nations. The Royal Opera is the leading company of Britain. In favourable circumstances it can be run on a reasonable subsidy, with a fair proportion of

cheaper seats, but the problems of the rebuilding and the closure overwhelmed the old management, and then proved too much for the new one as well.

There is indeed a need for a new structure, in order to make that possible, the old board and its top management should be content to go. The committee's recommendation to appoint an administrator in their place is probably the wrong way to meet a real need. The silliest sentence in the committee's report is that they "would prefer to see the house run by a philistine with the requisite financial acumen than by the succession of opera and ballet lovers who have brought a great and valuable institution to its knees". If a philistine were put in charge, the Royal Opera House would be an artistic and an even greater financial disaster. Philistines cannot make a success of opera houses.

The committee recognised that Mrs Vivienne Duffield and Sir Robert Gavron were excellent directors who had little responsibility for the disaster. I would accept the board's resignation and then ask Mrs Duffield to be the new chairman; she loves the house, has devoted herself and her money to it, has great financial acumen, and has a tough and indomitable spirit. That is what is most needed now. She could choose a new general director, who would answer to her; heaven help the director if he let her down.

The committee seems also to be unrealistic about the sources of future funding. The finances of the Royal Opera House can be made to balance only if there is a combination of three elements — public funding, private sponsorship, and gifts and a substantial box office contribution. This does mean that those who can afford very high prices ought to pay handsomely for the boxes and the best seats. The Austrian taxpayer is willing to subsidise the opera in Vienna so that the wealthiest opera-goers can enjoy cheap seats in the best parts of the house. That does not make sense; it increases the extent to which the poor are subsidising the rich. At this point of disaster in Covent Garden, everything needs to be re-thought, but the old sources of funding, built up over many years, cannot simply be discarded.

The future for the Royal Opera House depends on good management, but it also depends on a successful blending of old and new.

You're in a minority, Mr Straw

Magnus Linklater on a worryingly divisive new law

The lady's cut-glass accent — the familiar sound of the interfering middle class at its bossiest — rang through the village hall. "Now, everyone, I want you to gather round and listen carefully. Could we please have a little hush at the back there?" It could easily have been Lynda Snell, straight out of *The Archers*; it positively invited mutiny.

In fact, this was a clip from a recent radio programme on anti-English attitudes in Scotland. The resented muttering in the background, we were told, was a manifestation of racial prejudice, a malaise that was sadly on the increase north of the border.

From today we have a Bill to control it. The Scottish section of the Crime and Disorder Bill dictates that if it turns rusty — if, for instance, the village were to gang up on the Lynda Snell figure, causing her to feel she and her family were being driven out of the community — the police could step in. The new Bill introduces the offence of persistent harassment, and Government sources have stressed that the aim is to "crack down" on hostility towards "ethnic minorities", with the English specifically in mind.

The English? An ethnic minority within the United Kingdom? Even I had not realised we had travelled this far. Nor was I aware that racial prejudice in Scotland was so bad that it required new laws to control it. True, there have been incidences of anti-English discrimination, mostly in rural communities where there may be resentment against rich incomers. And there is, of course, a rich tradition of English-baiting on the football terraces. But I doubt if deep-seated prejudice is widespread, or growing. The notion that this is a social menace which requires new laws is absurd.

But that is the trouble with socially improving legislation of the kind to which this Government — and its predecessor — is now seemingly dedicated. Laws which seek to regulate the way people behave tend towards extremes. On one level, the Home Secretary's Bill (of which this is a section) is a straightforward response to public concern about social disorder — young tearaways who make life on housing estates intolerable; gangs who wage campaigns of hatred against Pakistani families; children roaming the streets late at night. But it is also greatly extends the powers of the authorities. It enables the police to arrest individuals for causing alarm or distress; imposes a statutory duty on councils to devise anti-disorder strategies; sets down "parenting" orders, requiring parents to ensure their children attend school and are home by fixed times; introduces the concept of night-time curfews.

All this may catch the headlines. I doubt if it will do much to improve behaviour, and I am certain it will lead to a deterioration in relations with the police, on whom much of the burden will fall. They will have to interpret, then impose the new laws.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the legislation makes its first appearance in the same week as the suspension of Detective Superintendent Ray Mallon, who introduced the concept of "zero tolerance" in Middlesbrough. Jack Straw might almost have had Mallon in mind when he began drafting his new Bill. Zero tolerance, as applied in Middlesbrough, meant stopping people for spitting, swearing or dropping litter. It meant stamping out "loutish behaviour", and cracking down on the theft of milk bottles. But it also meant using CS gas more often than any other force in Britain, a fourfold increase in stop-and-search arrests, and a highly dubious set of crime figures.

Good relations with the police are vital if standards of public behaviour are to be raised. It is hard to imagine a policy better designed to achieve the exact opposite. It is interesting to note that there is a marked absence of enthusiasm for the Middlesbrough model among other police forces. Building confidence in the police with it. Institutionalised harassment, of the kind practised by Mallon, is hardly the best way of achieving that; nor is applying a set of laws which command resentment, rather than respect.

I have a double complaint against the Scottish section of this Bill. If it is used to tackle anti-English behaviour, it will create a set of crime statistics where none existed before, elevating a minor prejudice into a major political issue. And it will exacerbate relations just at the point where they should be improving. The whole point of devolution was to give Scotland powers which had hitherto been wielded south of the border, thus removing a major cause of political resentment. The idea was that a better balance would be struck, setting two partners within the United Kingdom on a more equal footing than before.

How depressing, then, to see a new law being brought forward, which carries the presumption of hostility between two sets of citizens, and seeks to codify it. And if, on the other hand, ministers assure us that there is no such presumption, then why introduce it at all?

JASPER GERARD

Just William

MODERNISING the monarchy is a long slow job, particularly when it comes to marriage: ask Ffion Jenkins. The fiancée of Tory leader William Hague discovered this the other night when Buckingham Palace failed to invite her to a state banquet, leaving her intended to pitch up on his own. Poor Hague was one of only a handful of the 130 guests who were not accompanied to the dinner, thrown by the Queen for the President of Brazil. Meanwhile Tony dined with Cherie and Paddy entertained his wife Jane. Friends of William and Ffion are unimpressed. "I understand the need for protocol but it is unreasonable not to invite the woman who is going to be his wife," says Julie Kirkbride, promising new Tory MP.

The Palace, however, is unrepentant. "If fiancées are invited to state banquets then spaces for other guests will not be available. In three weeks time she will be invited." They wed on December 19. Happily Hague was compensated by talking intently to the Prince of Wales. The absence of female company brought little sympathy from the great Lord St John of Fawley, a regular. "Lady Douglas Home once arrived with her husband Alec at a banquet unaware that her presence was not requested. Lord Home was led into the dining room. His wife was quietly placed in the servant's quarters for the duration."

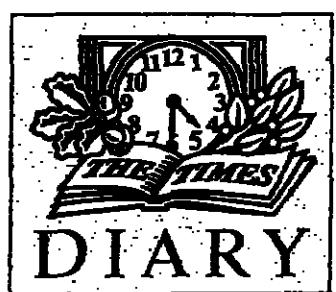


Upset: Kirkbride, and Ffion

Paul Keetch, Liberal Democrat MP, received a message on his bleep in the Commons chamber this week: "Your shirt is undone and your stomach is sticking out." The author was his wife.

Shoot out

THE Duchess of York is adopting a novel line in the hunting debate. She has been advising friends to



give up shooting because she believes it is bad for one's "karma", after consulting a mystic in India earlier this year. For some of her friends, responding to her plea has meant making mighty sacrifices. Nigel Fenner-Fowkes, a millionaire restaurateur and close friend of the Duchess, has left his Purdeys in their case since the beginning of the season, officially blaming pressure of business. But friends of the former Lloyd's broker, who has been bagging birds for the past 15 years, say he has fallen for the Duchess's persuasive manner. "I have just not had the time this season," moans Fenner-Fowkes. "I miss the shoots and some of the people."

IT is Thatcherism's greatest triumph. Arthur Scargill's old Sheffield HQ, from where he directed

the disastrous miners strike, has been turned into a rather swanky wine bar.



●DEFIANCE, or a last stand? Above is Humphrey, the Downing Street cat, adorning the Cabinet Office Christmas card. Sir Robin Butler, Cabinet Secretary, chose the picture against medical advice — amid fears that a bad kidney might prevent Humphrey from making it to Christmas.

Black mark

THOSE republicans at Blackwell's are taking a risk — they have been

selling Kitty Kelley's trashy book *The Royals*. British publishers, fearing libel, steered clear. Waterstones and Books etc. were wary shops that they could be in trouble if they imported it. The US publisher undertook not even to distribute the book here. But a Blackwell's store has somehow listed it as a "Christmas choice". The managing director, Anthony Thompson, says that he ordered the books off shelves while he "checked the legal position". Strange that this week the branch was still telling customers that it "had a couple" left.

Are new Labour's policy wonks running out of steam? David Miliband, chief mega-brain in the No 10 Policy Unit, addressed some young Labour researchers at a meeting in the Commons and asked them for bright ideas. But despite his gracious manner, the wretches could only whinge about cuts to lone parents' benefits.

Bravo Brava

A Playbox cover girl has signed her first classical music contract. Linda Brava, whose talents have already been noticed by Lord Lloyd-Webber, is to record the violin concerto of her fellow Fin, the late Jean Sibelius. Dismissing suggestions



Brava: new string to her bow

that her pair of jobs seem to lead in different directions, she says: "The Playbox shots are very beautiful. I am so proud. They are like paintings." I am sure they are. But Ms Brava, more Pamela Anderson than Lord Marmion, makes Vanessa May look starchy. So what does the Sibelius Society make of the news? "We welcome any attempt to widen the appeal of Sibelius." That appeal, I suspect, has just been truly widened.



TALES OF KAUFMAN

The select committee has raised the volume too high

Operas are supposed to be melodramatic; select committees are not. Unfortunately, Gerald Kaufman's report on the Royal Opera House, published yesterday, is as overblown as the death scene from *Manon Lescaut* — and as hard to take seriously as her long drawn-out expiry in a Louisiana wilderness. With his incoherent language and sensational recommendations, the chairman of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee has ensured himself two days of headlines. But as a considered critique of the problems facing Covent Garden, Mr Kaufman's report deserves less applause.

Many will share the committee's frustration with the saga of mismanagement at the House. Hundreds of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money have been poured into an institution that has been overseen by unpaid amateurs with little financial or management skill and even less accountability.

The structures of management were invisible, with the chief executive, as the report admits, having "responsibility without power". Financial information was as opaque as it was inaccurate. Artistic considerations were put above financial concerns. And, when it came to planning the years of closure while the opera house was being redeveloped, Covent Garden's board members looked over the precipice, shut their eyes and jumped.

In its exposure of this culpable failure of planning, Mr Kaufman's report is detailed and trenchant. Where it falls down, however, is in its personal criticism of individuals, in particular the new chief executive, Mary Allen, attacked in language that might be appropriate for a fraudster or peculator, but not for a decent public servant in a mire of many's making.

Her "crime", in Mr Kaufman's eyes, was to accept the job without it having been advertised, a condition of the funding agree-

ment between her then employer, the Arts Council, and Covent Garden. Even though the appointment had to be made urgently, this was probably a mistake.

Because she was being asked to be both judge and defendant in the same case, she tried to resolve the issue by suggesting that the Department of National Heritage should adjudicate on the method of appointment. In the anomalous situation in which she found herself, this seems quite reasonable. Mr Kaufman, however, says that she should have asked her deputy to decide the matter, a course of action that would have put both him and her in an invidious position. His conclusion, that "Ms Allen's conduct fell seriously below the standards to be expected of the principal officer of a public body whose loyalty should first and foremost be to the organisation which employs her", seems grossly unfair.

The committee also accuses her of not keeping a tight enough rein on the opera house's finances while she was Secretary General of the Arts Council. As a result of this, demarcation, Mr Kaufman believes that Ms Allen should resign forthwith. She has been in post for just three months and has already drawn up a rescue plan. Nobody has questioned her ability to take on what must be one of the most demanding jobs in the land. She should have a chance to prove her worth: if the new house is finished on time and within budget by December 1999 and if union practices have by then been modernised, then she will have deserved to stay.

If anyone's head should roll, it is that of Lord Chadlington, chairman of the board. He has been in place for a year and a half, and has presided over a financial collapse. A new chairman should be appointed. The board should get on with fundraising, and allow Ms Allen to get on with the job.

TIGER BALM

Help for South Korea to turn crisis into opportunity

The medicine prescribed by the International Monetary Fund for South Korea is a powerful emetic, intended to effect a rapid sacking out of its debt-ridden financial institutions and industrial conglomerates. The assumption behind it is that the sharper the shock administered to the system, the sooner international confidence in a Korean return to more securely based growth will be restored. It will change the way the entire country operates, breaking with habits of government intervention that date back to the authoritarian 1970s, and, by opening up the South Korean economy, it is the right medicine, and it is essential that South Korea does not flinch from taking it, and that it also supplements it with other remedies, such as reforms of the country's unbelievably rigid labour laws, which are not in the IMF's medicine chest.

The world has a strong interest in progress. Turning around this economy, the IMF put together, is indispensable to an Asian recovery. But, even when supported with \$5 billion in international finance, the biggest package in the IMF's history and the one to which Britain as well as the US and Japan will, rightly, contribute, President Kim Young Sam has spoken no more than the truth in telling his countrymen to brace for "bone-carving pain". And politically, it could hardly come at a more awkward time.

South Korea is a highly presidential system in the middle of a presidential election campaign. The outgoing occupant of the Blue House is a burnt-out political case and his successor is not due to take office until February 25. The country is thus virtually without political leadership as it embarks on socially wrenching change which will inevitably mean a sharp rise in

unemployment. Given the militancy of the labour unions, the lack of effective social safety nets for the unemployed, the justified anger of its new middle class and the weaknesses in the political institutions needed to deal with the shock of a plunge from rapid to slow growth, there could be violence.

Michel Camdessus, the IMF's managing director, has wisely sought to insulate the deal from electoral politics. Knowing that in the absence of agreement, South Korea's banks would be unable to pay back \$20 billion in short-term foreign debt due this month, he kept his pen poised until he had guaranteed that all three of the front-runners in the presidential race would honour the terms of the package. This they must do.

The first task is to come clean about the failures of a system which has combined culpable inattention to financial regulation with too much political interference in investment decisions. For months, South Koreans have been assured that the country's "economic fundamentals" are sound. They have discovered virtually overnight that its financial institutions are riddled with bad debt, that its massive chaebol corporations have piled up borrowing and surplus production capacity and that wage rises averaging 15 per cent over the past seven years have been at the price of South Korea's once formidable competitive edge. Their faith in politics has been terribly shaken. But the fierce national pride of South Koreans is an asset; they are old hands at converting crisis into fresh opportunities. In many countries, there would have been a run on the banks; in Seoul, housewives are patriotically rationing collection boxes for foreign exchange. The country has great strengths; it is right for the rest of the world to provide the help they need to rediscover them.

DONE TO A T

The Sinatra of steaks will come fry no more

Where John Gummer favoured keeping the lid on the pressure cooker, Jack Cunningham is more of a barbecue chef — getting it all out in the open and accepting that some fingers may get burnt in the process. The Agriculture Minister's decision to ban beef on the bone is a rapid, crisis may fear panic, response to the latest scientific assessment of the risks from BSE. It contrasts starkly with the attempts by Mr Gummer to play down the danger of disease when BSE first came to ministerial and public attention.

Although only around 5 per cent of beef is sold on the bone, cattle farmers understandably fear that the dramatic nature of Dr Cunningham's announcement will feed another public panic. Poor John Bull, just as he had pulled himself off the canvas, has been dealt another smack direct to the ribs. The Agriculture Minister appears sensitive to those farmers' concerns. He apparently hopes that the speed and openness with which he has dealt with one perceived danger will reassure world markets that the British beef which remains on sale can now be guaranteed to be safe. He may be proved right, but that will not console those courageous carnivores who relished every part of the cow and were prepared to risk death to enjoy any one of a thousand cuts.

Nanny has already taken several treats off the menu. Health scares will have certainly offended those with Gallic tastes. Anyone who likes their meat prepared raw and spicy will resent steak tartare being driven

underground. Those modest English gourmets who think brains should only ever be displayed on toast have been similarly deprived and Italophiles who require marrow for an authentically Milanese risotto must make do with an extra pound of (pasteurised) parmesan. Now T-bone steaks, fore-rib of beef and oxtail are to join these other samizdat sweetmeats on the Index of dishes banned by those cleaning up the chopping block and promoting a butcher's counter reformation.

The traditional T-bone steak is like a Frank Sinatra number on the list of entrees: it has a simple but perfect structure, is simultaneously muscular yet tender and although forever identified with America its appeal is universal. As with khaki chinos or Diet Coke, the American favourite becomes everyman's staple. The demise of the T-bone now is as melancholy as any moment in the wee small hours of the morning.

The oxtail will not wait for mourners who will miss the unguent richness of the perfect braise served with polenta or mash. The rib of beef deserves its stately farewell with black arm-banded carvery chefs sheathing their sabatiers in sorrow. But it is the loss of the T-bone which will be most keenly felt. After every new scare beef consumption has dipped. But the panic passes, and beef returns to the table. So it is sure to be again. But it is both a pity and a paradox that there will be fewer cuts under this Government than the last.

Labour called to account on taxes

From Mr Nicholas Bennett

Sir, As Conservative candidate for Reading West, I strove during the general election campaign to convince the voters that Labour's promise not to increase income tax did not mean that there would not be increases in tax on incomes.

The announcements of new taxes on savings of £50,000 or more and council tax rises of anything up to 10 of 11 per cent (reports, December 3), together with the £15 billion grab in the Budget from pension fund investors, may be far more effective in explaining the point I was trying to make.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS BENNETT,
Folstead House,
86 Titchhurst Road,
Reading, Berkshire,
December 3.

From Mr T. Jack Craven

Sir, As in the past, the provision is to pay for a Labour Government's improvidence. At least Denis Healey was honest enough to say something about "pips squeaking", new Labour are mere humbug.

Yours sincerely,
JOCK CRAVEN,
19 Albany Street, NW1,
December 2.

Political donations

From Mr Richard A. Edwards

Sir, Blind trusts (report, November 28) are the very antithesis of the open and transparent political system which the Prime Minister claims he wants.

Surely such trusts are not philanthropic, but are intended to obscure the sources of party funding and hide the identity of those who make donations. While the beneficiary may have personal knowledge of a donation, the general public remain unaware not only of the link between him and the donor but also the size of the donation.

In Australia, by contrast, the Commonwealth Electoral Act requires that any donations to candidates over A\$200 cannot legally be accepted by a trust (or a candidate) if the gift is not registered by the donor with the Electoral Commission. Any anonymous donation discovered by electoral auditors is forfeited to the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Has the time not come for the enactment of a similar provision here?

Yours etc,
RICHARD A. EDWARDS,
60 Queens Road,
Devizes, Wiltshire,
November 28.

Revision of legal aid

From the Parliamentary Secretary,
Lord Chancellor's Department

Sir, Mr R. P. Towers (letter, December 2; see also letters, November 19 and 20) raises the quite proper question of whether it is acceptable, in cases brought on behalf of a child, for the lawyers to take a success fee out of the damages when they win a case under a conditional fee arrangement.

The same question, of course, arises in principle in respect of adults under a disability, or indeed in any case taken under a no win, no fee arrangement.

The Government has made clear that it will be consulting on its proposal to extend conditional fees to all civil cases, except family matters, and on how to implement its intention to substitute conditional fee agreements for legal aid in most claims for money. The position of children and others under a disability, along with a range of other issues, need to be explored; hence the consultation.

Had the Government reached detailed conclusions about these matters before it announced the direction it wanted to move in, we would have been accused of being unwilling to listen and of having made up our minds without giving people a chance to comment. It is therefore difficult to understand why we are now being criticised, having been open from the start about the direction we want our policies to take and having made clear our determination to consult widely on the issues involved.

Yours sincerely,
GEOFF HOON,
Lord Chancellor's Department,
Selbourne House,
54-60 Victoria Street, SW1,
December 2.

Party manners

From Mr Ian Mitchell

Sir, The simplest piece of non-medical advice to bored partygoers is surely — don't go.

Mr John R. Moore (letter, December 2); may, however, have already stumbled on the solution to the problem himself. Partygoers who have read his letter today will no doubt never invite him again.

Yours faithfully,
IAN MITCHELL,
76 South Mains Road,
Millingdale, Glasgow G2,
December 2.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046. e-mail for letters@the-times.co.uk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Sharing resources among schools

From Dr Harry Judge

Sir, No issue is more important to the social and educational health of this country than the relationship between maintained (or state) and independent (or public) schools. This is a peculiarly English — not British — problem and any serious effort to address it deserves a warm welcome (report and leading article, November 27).

In the 1960s, the Public Schools Commission, of which I was a member, made a heroic effort to integrate the great public schools within the mainstream of schooling. In the same years, as the headmaster of a secondary school, I took part in what was then a unique partnership within North Oxfordshire of three independent schools, a college of further education and a newly founded comprehensive. Teaching of A levels and an extensive programme of cultural and sporting activities were shared.

The local effort was a limited success, the national one an unqualified failure, to the bitter regret of some of the most imaginative heads of prestigious public schools. Yet there are important lessons to be recalled, if this new initiative is to succeed.

Ministers would be wise to avoid the implication, at the moment widely conveyed, that this is some kind of a missionary exercise to poor heathens. There must be no suggestion of the innate superiority of either system, or of the strong helping the weak. There are maintained schools whose sixth-form teachers would, in terms of scholar-

ship and teaching expertise, have much to offer pupils in small independent schools. The language must be one of partnership.

Ministers must acknowledge more openly that many of the differences between the independent and state sectors are rooted not in teaching quality but in massive and unacceptable differences in funding and workplace conditions, as well as in the brutally simple fact that independent schools can choose whom to teach.

There has been more than a suggestion in recent leaks that independent school pupils are in a majority in this university simply because their teachers are better at "preparing" them for Oxbridge entrance. This is not true. I am convinced, as a former tutor for admissions, that the main reason for this sad and persistent imbalance is that not enough comprehensive school pupils apply for places in colleges which, it now seems clear, will continue to enjoy financial advantages (merited, in my view) conferred upon them by the State.

The Government should deliver the clear message that fewer entrants to the ancient and publicly funded universities must be recruited from the independent schools. The health of the universities, as of the schools, depends on this.

Yours faithfully,
HARRY JUDGE,
Brasenose College, Oxford,
harry.judge@bruden.ox.ac.uk
December 1.

Exacting a price for cleaner energy

From Professor Ian Fells

Sir, The Prime Minister has made an heroic commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent over 1990 figures by the year 2010 (report, November 29; see also letters, November 17, 20; December 1). This will enable him to capture the moral high ground at the conference on climate change in Kyoto this week, as he did in New York earlier this year.

It is appropriate that a highly developed country like the UK provides leadership in combating serious threat to the world climate. But it will be difficult to achieve and will require heroic decisions about our energy future.

Achieving 10 per cent electricity from renewable sources, a five-fold increase over today, cannot be done by building wind generators; it would require 25,000, 60-metre high machines. Nor will coppice willow in wood-burning power stations or solar-electric cells provide the necessary 5000 MW.

The only way that I can see is to build the Severn Barrage, which would provide around 7 per cent of UK electricity; it would take ten years to build, cost £9 billion and last for a hundred years.

Another difficult decision concerns the future of the nuclear industry, which is set to run down over the next 20 years as stations come to the end of their lives. If this run-down is allowed to happen, by 2010 between four and eight million tonnes of additional carbon will go into the atmosphere, depending on whether gas or coal replaces the nuclear stations.

This must be compared with the 35 million tonnes of carbon-saving required. There is no chance of meeting our 20 per cent carbon dioxide reduction commitment without a strong nuclear component.

The third decision requires a complete change in attitude towards personal transport. The number of cars on UK roads is predicted to rise by 30 per cent by 2010, which will again increase the carbon dioxide emission.

A raft of measures, energy taxes and the like will also be needed, but statesman-like government intervention is required if the 20 per cent

pledge is not to be a hostage to fortune.

Yours faithfully,
IAN FELLS,
The University of
Newcastle upon Tyne,
Merz Court,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU.

From Mr Daoud Yamin

Sir, I note from your leading article, "Green pique" (November 29), your support for the United States proposal that the developing countries should join with the West in restricting their greenhouse gas emissions. In my view this proposal effectively means that the West, having less than 20 per cent of the world's population, will still account for as much as 70 per cent of emissions if all cuts were the same. This seems to be in line with the West's share of world income.

As pollution and standard of living go hand in hand (the US being the classic example) the proposal may be seen as a message to China, India and the other developing countries that they should not aspire to improve their standard of living much beyond current levels. That the world must forever be a place of the haves and the have-nots, inevitable though this might be, is a proposition which the developing countries are likely to regard, rightly, as unacceptable.

It should not come as a surprise if the developing countries reject national pollution targets and opt for per capita levels as the basis for agreement, especially having regard to the observation made by Mr John Prescott (letter, November 17) that at present the average American is responsible for 25 times more emissions than the average Indian.

As long as fossil fuels determine whether lifestyles are maintained or improved, ultimately it will be for people in the West rather than governments to decide if we are prepared to accept a drastic reduction in our standard of living, or for the rest of the world to decide if they are prepared to remain deprived. I await with interest the outcome of the meeting in Kyoto.

Yours faithfully,
D. YAMIN,
9 Pageant Walk, Croydon, Surrey,
December 1.

NHS performance

From Mr Patrick White

Sir, Mr Richard Temple (letter, December 2) claims that combining private and NHS practice may persuade patients to pay for treatment to the benefit of the consultant. My personal experience is precisely the reverse.

Last year my wife had a private consultation, the outcome of which was that she would need a major operation. We indicated to her consultant that we were ready to pay for private treatment. When we discussed our preferred date, about four months from the consultation, he proposed that she be added to his NHS list, with private treatment as a fallback. In the event, her operation was carried out at our local NHS hospital ten days after our requested date.

Yours faithfully,
P. L. WHITE,
65 Grappenhall Road,
Stockton Heath,
Warrington, Cheshire,
pat@phile.demon.co.uk

From Mr J. R. Clegg

Sir, Not only do we smokers live for the benefit of others (letter from Mr Philip Dinnage, November 24), we also die for them. Premature death saves the Exchequer millions in pensions.

Yours faithfully,
J. R. CLEGG,
Arendal, 103 Wimmerfield Avenue,
Killay, Swansea.

Oaths of allegiance

From Professor Keith Kyle

Sir, You report today that the Government is to abolish the Royal Ulster Constabulary's oath of service to the Queen as part of its efforts to increase Roman Catholic recruitment to its ranks. I applaud this move and note that you record the reaction of an Ulster Unionist Party spokesman that the change of oath was "not something we will go to the wall over".

Why then is it thought necessary to refuse admittance to the House of Commons to two duly elected Members on the grounds that they are not prepared to take a similar oath to the Queen? Is it not presumptuous of our Parliament to tell two United Kingdom constituencies that if they opt in their wisdom to have republicans and believers in a united Ireland as their representatives they shall be shut out from the House?

May I remind Honourable Members of the experience of their predecessors with Charles Bradlaugh, MP for Northampton, who was excluded repeatedly between 1880 to 1886 because, being a rationalist, he would not swear on the Bible? He was allowed to take his seat in 1886 and thereby established a precedent that can surely be built on with a little imagination.

Yours sincerely,
KEITH KYLE,
(Visiting Professor of History,
University of Ulster),
25 Opplands Road, NW3,
December 3.

Contrary opinions on children's diet

From Dr Mark Tattersall

Sir, Readers of your report (November 28) of Dr Dee Dawson's speech to the Girls' Schools Association on eating disorders might gain the erroneous impression that these disorders are caused primarily by the promotion of low-fat diets and the vogue for thin fashion models.

This belies the clinical presentation of children and young people with eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa as vulnerable individuals with an overwhelmingly intense drive to assert control over their lives in this particular way.

The underlying reasons for this drive for control are legion, but result in powerfully self-perpetuating disorders that can be tragically severe, and are much more significant than simply over-enthusiastic dieting behaviour.

Yours sincerely,
MARK TATTERSALL,
(Consultant psychiatrist),
Eating Disorder Unit,
Huntcombe Manor Hospital,
Huntcombe Lane South,
Taplow, Berkshire,
December 1.

From the Chief Executive
of the Vegetarian Society

Sir, Despite Dr Dee Dawson's assertions, there is no proven relationship between vegetarianism and eating disorders. Vegetarianism can yield very significant health benefits, but it is not a diet that will guarantee weight loss.

The vast majority of individuals, whether they are teenage girls or otherwise, adopt a vegetarian diet because of moral concerns about animal suffering. Meat is not an essential part of young people's diets, and indeed recent guidelines issued by the Government's Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy recommended a drastic reduction in meat consumption.

Vegetarianism is not a sign of food obsession but rather a sign of balanced judgment.

Yours sincerely,
TINA FOX,
Chief Executive,
The Vegetarian Society,
Parkdale, Dunham Road,
Altrincham, Cheshire,
November 29.

From Mrs Margaret Fryer

Sir, It would be nice if doctors such as Dr Dawson, who blame parents for giving their children an unsuitable diet, would occasionally apologise on behalf of the medical profession for the wrong advice we were given until the day before yesterday.

I am sure I never read in baby-care books that "chocolate, cheese, crisps and chips are wonderful energy-giving foods which children need". Why should parents be held responsible at every volte-face?

Yours faithfully,
M. FRYER,
20 Trenchill, Covingham,
Swindon, Wiltshire,
November 28.

Westminster chapel

From Canon Dr Donald Gray
and Dr Chris Pond

Sir, Your article (Weekend, November 29) on the Palace of Westminster's Chapel, as background to the Leader of the Opposition's marriage, suggests it was there that Ann Widdecombe was "converted": in fact, she was received into the Roman Catholic Church on its own territory of Westminster Cathedral. The protest from Dr Ian Paisley was a general one about the use of the chapel for Catholic masses several years before.

"The crypt" is not a crypt at all, being built at ground level, and is properly called the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft. Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff of all Christian denominations are welcome, as well as the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Methodists, and the Roman Catholics have periodic services there.

The wedding of Ffion Jenkins and William Hague, to be conducted jointly by Anglican and Methodist clergy, will be a worthy example of the ecumenical spirit for which the chapel has long been known.

Yours faithfully,
DONALD GRAY,
(Speaker's Chaplain),
CHRIS POND,
(House of Commons Library),
House of Commons,
December 1.

Millennium challenge

From Mr Allen Levy

Sir, Peter Mandelson's Delphic statement that Britain would never be forgiven if it failed to mark the millennium at the meridian (report, December 3) is worthy of more than a passing comment.

May I suggest a competition (first prize a one-day pass to visit the Dome; second prize a season ticket) in which entrants name five individuals or nations who would not forgive Britain for its neglect of the sacred duty to which Mr Mandelson was referring.

Yours faithfully,
ALLEN LEVY,
3 Stanley Gardens, W11,
allen@ace-trains.demon.co.uk
December 3.

OBITUARIES

PROFESSOR ERIC LAITHWAITE

Eric Laithwaite, Emeritus Professor of Heavy Electrical Engineering at Imperial College, London, died on November 21 aged 76. He was born on June 14, 1921.

At the age of 76, at a time when many emeritus professors have long since hung up their gowns, Eric Laithwaite was happily working like a schoolboy with a Meccano set, on the biggest project of his life — a huge working model of a futuristic rocket launcher, America's National Aeronautics and Space Administration had commissioned him to develop a concept worthy of Ian Fleming's Dr No — a five-mile long track, to be tunneled up the inside of a 10,000 ft mountain, hurtling a space capsule along the track and out through the summit into Earth orbit. The power was to come not from conventional rockets but from the love of Laithwaite's life — linear motors.

Eric Roberts Laithwaite was born in Atherton, Lancashire, the son of a farmer, and was educated at Kirckham Grammar School, the Regent Street Polytechnic and Manchester University. He served in the RAF during the Second World War, and was attached to the Royal Aeronautical Establishment at Farnborough from 1943 to 1946. He returned to Manchester to teach from 1950 to 1964, when he took up his chair at Imperial College, where he remained until he retired in 1986.

Ever since 1947 Laithwaite had been known as "the father of the linear motor", however, as he constantly pointed out, he did not invent it, he simply rediscovered it. "The linear motor is no more than an ordinary electric motor spread out, but it can create magnetic rivers capable of providing friction-free travel," he told 1950s television audiences. Within a few years he had designed the world's first magnetically levitating high-speed train, and such was the force of his personality that he managed to persuade the Government of the day to back it with £5 million. A mile of track was built and a full-scale levitating locomotive tested. It was one of the last great all-British postwar investments in high-tech engineering, but it was abandoned. "He was dev-



astated", observed the Science Museum historian Brian Bowers, "but it did not dampen his inventiveness."

For Laithwaite it was a crossroads. Having pinned his future on magnetic levitation, in his early fifties, he had to turn to other things. He threw himself into writing learned books on the linear motor and popular ones on invention; he reviewed his childhood passion for butterflies (at his death he had one of the country's largest private collections of specimens); he became a familiar figure on radio and television, where his engaging enthusiasm rapidly made him Britain's best-known engineer of the day.

It was his fame, however, that was to lead indirectly to his downfall, in the eyes of

many of his colleagues. As Britain's first media engineer, he attracted the interest of a small army of amateur inventors. Many popular scientists are profoundly irritated by this sort of attention, often bemoaning what they regard as "crank" letters.

But not Laithwaite. One letter, in particular, caught his eye in it an amateur inventor described a wheeled device which apparently contravened Newton's Third Law of Motion — it moved without any power to the wheels or any thrust. Intrigued, Laithwaite invited the inventor, Alex Jones, to Imperial College. The device Jones brought was powered by a simple gyroscope and it moved forward on Laithwaite's bench with ease.

"Alex showed me something I could not explain, so I just had to investigate it. It was sheer curiosity, like Alice following the White Rabbit," Laithwaite wrote to say later. He spent the next few years immersing himself in the specialised world of gyroscopes, gradually convincing himself that they did break known scientific laws, and that they might be a hitherto unrecognised source of preternatural power. So, when he was invited to give the Faraday Lecture at the Royal Institution, he knew exactly what to show his august audience.

He brought with him an array of gyroscopes — from toy ones that balanced on model Eiffel towers, to a huge 50lb one that he spun up and raised effortlessly above his head with one hand. "Look," he exclaimed to the assembled dignitaries, "It's lost weight!" Ignoring their evident shock at such a heretical claim, he pressed on to his final demonstration — two spinning gyroscopes mounted on kitchen scales, which he claimed had also lost weight.

"I thought my fellow scientists would be genuinely interested, so I wasn't prepared for the utter hostility of their reaction," Laithwaite recalled later. For the first time in his history, the Royal Institution failed to publish the Faraday Lecture that year. Laithwaite's nomination for the Fellowship of the Royal Society was cancelled. He retired from Imperial College in 1981 pretty much in disgrace.

But he never lost his fascination for gyroscopes. "None of my critics could ever explain to me how a 50lb spinning wheel loses weight," he said. He teamed up with Bill Dawson, a fellow electrical engineer and businessman, and spent the last years of his life experimenting with a variety of complex gyroscopic rigs, finally proving to his satisfaction that they could produce "mass transfer" — a brand new thrustless propulsion system. In 1993 he applied for a patent on a gyroscopic space-drive; typically, he had built the demonstration model out of his childhood Meccano set.

In September 1996, however, two NASA scientists arrived at his Sussex University laboratory, and his life went full circle. They were looking for a new way of getting spacecraft into earth orbit, thought of linear motors, and headed straight for the world expert. "I showed them all the magic of magnetic levitation," said Laithwaite happily, "and they gave me the contract." He was working on Maglifter when he collapsed.

Although he mixed effortlessly with the high and mighty (he was a friend of the Prince of Wales — "I taught him everything he knows about science", he once remarked), he never abandoned his Lancastrian roots and vowels. He delighted in the sound of the spoken word, reciting poetry from memory with evident pleasure. His mastery for anecdotes was formidable and he delighted in their telling.

He leaves a widow, Sheila, two sons and two daughters. For some 13 years he fought,

LEONARD LAZAR

Leonard Lazar, barrister, died on November 4 on the Isles of Scilly aged 81. He was born in South Africa on June 8, 1916.



and sometimes won, human rights cases — often on behalf of "non-whites" — gaining a reputation for his ability to find loopholes in the prevailing repressive legislation. This work brought him into contact with such figures as Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Chief Albert Lutuli. It was a difficult, even dangerous, path that he followed, culminating in his work for the defence at the so-called treason trials, not as an advocate but as a fundraiser. He was one of the founders of the South African Defence and Aid Fund. As a result of the victory gained by the liberal lawyers at the initial treason trials, internal security in South Africa was tightened to such a degree that Len Lazar felt his family was threatened — he had by then a wife and three children — and he reluctantly decided to leave his native land for Britain.

He was warmly welcomed by political allies and sympathisers in this country, and for some years his Hampstead flat was the first port of call for fellow exiles. For a time he worked as a researcher at the London School of Economics, which led to a lectureship and then a senior lectureship there, as well as a stint as a lecturer at Cambridge University and a great deal of work on legal publications with the Oxford University Press.

There can be no doubt that Len Lazar suffered from being an exile and was rather robbed of his sense of mission. Happily, however, he could turn to his interests in the arts. As well as being the author of *Transnational Economic and Monetary Law*, an acclaimed multi-volume survey covering economic organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank, he had won a national short story competition in the 1950s, and during his retirement on the Isles of Scilly he devoted himself to poetry, painting, and playing the violin. A collection of 100 of his poems was published in the bi-annual *Scillonian Magazine*. His natural wit combined with his sense of fair play, and the colour of kindness decorated everything he wrote.

Len Lazar was twice married. He divorced his first wife, Ruth, in 1974, and in the following year he married his second wife, Primrose, who survives him along with his two sons and daughter from his first marriage.

ELSIE GREEN

Elsie Green, MBE, theatre director, died on November 6 aged 93. She was born on February 7, 1904.



IN THE course of a long life devoted to the theatre, Elsie Green was a teacher and mentor to many actors, a pioneer of drama therapy for mentally disturbed patients at Horton Hospital, Epsom, and a professional director of amateur theatre productions. She directed before the war at the Tavistock Little Theatre and then, from 1953 to 1988, at the National Trust's open-air theatre at Pooleston Lacey in Surrey.

For her work at Horton and Pooleston Lacey she was appointed MBE in 1977. By then her open-air productions of Shakespeare had achieved wide renown, and she had begun staging a second play each year, usually by Shaw or Wilde, attracting audiences of up to 2,000 to each performance. These National Trust seasons continued for an unbroken run of 36 years.

Elsie Elizabeth Santoin Green was born in her parents' pub in St Marylebone. Her mother was French, a former dressmaker who had become lady's maid to Lady Carnarvon and had met Elsie's father (then valet to Lord Carnarvon) while travelling on the Riviera. "Only such a romantic setting could have triggered off such an unsuitable match," said their daughter.

She remembered her childhood as "a grim but healthy life in Hampstead", magically brightened by visits with her father to the "Met" in the Edgware Road, where she saw performers such as George Robey and Nellie Wallace. She later recalled visits to the Coliseum, where she saw Dia-

ghilev's Russian Ballet.

For some years she attended Helen May's ballet school, but she had to give up for health reasons. Instead, she pursued her strong interest in the theatre by studying speech and drama at the Guildhall and the City Literary Institute.

It was at the City Lit that she met Jay Barnett, whom she married in 1935. Over the next few years she worked as a director of plays for the Tavistock Little Theatre which produced a different play each week, ranging from Greek tragedy to Feydeau farce.

The Blitz closed the theatre, and the Barnetts moved with their two-year-old son, Michael, to Epsom. They started the Epsom Drama Group, originally to tour with *Everyman and Murder in the Cathedral*, and after the war it graduated to a more ambitious programme.

In 1953 Green was asked by the National Trust to direct *As You Like It* for the new open air theatre at Pooleston Lacey. She could not resist what she called "the Pooleston magic" — enhanced for that first production by supplementary lighting from thousands of glowing worms in the surrounding meadows. The glow-worms, sadly, did not return. But the audience did, growing from 1,500 to a faithful following of nearly 20,000.

The quality of her direction and the talent of her amateur actors, many of whom moved on to successful stage and film careers, also led to invitations to restage Shakespeare productions at the Chichester Festival Theatre and others. Her farewell production was *Othello* in 1988.

Although she supposedly retired that summer, she immediately recruited some of her most experienced actors into a group called Evergreen Productions, largely with a view to raising money for Sam Wanamaker's Shakespeare's Globe Building Fund. Plays by Shakespeare, Shaw and Eliot were presented at the Globe Museum Theatre and various other venues. Her name as a benefactor is now carved in stone at the Shakespeare Globe Theatre.

Out of the public eye, Elsie Green gained great satisfaction from her work with mentally disturbed patients through drama therapy. Her husband predeceased her. She is survived by their son.

GORDON SLATER

Gordon Slater, CMC, CBE, civil servant, died on November 5 aged 93. He was born on December 14, 1903.

FEARS OF a demonstration by Cambridge University undergraduates against registration for military service in 1939 led the vice-chancellor to consult with the manager of the employment exchange and to agree that students and other men of military age should register together on a strictly alphabetical basis — a most unusual mixing of town and gown. The local manager, Gordon Slater, took the first

registration in the country. When war came, Slater acted as secretary of the recruitment board of professors and tutors who sought to ensure that scientific and professional talent among those called up should be put to the best use for the war effort. Consultations about individual problems, including those of conscientious objectors, led to friendly invitations to the high tables of various colleges, where Slater may not have revealed that he had left school at 13.

Born in a farm cottage at Broadwater, Sussex, the second son of a carter, Gordon

Slater was educated at different village schools as his father moved from one farm to another. His first job was as a messenger boy, delivering telegrams around Rottingdean. Evening classes at the head post office and success in an exam brought promotion to clerical assistant in the post office engineering division at Croydon by the time he was 16. Evening classes at technical college got him through the Civil Service examination to join the recently formed Ministry of Labour in 1928.

A series of promotions took him to Cambridge in 1938, then back to headquarters in

London in 1941. Further advancement was possible only by transferring from the departmental branch to the administrative branch; promotion to assistant secretary in 1945 was an unprecedented crossing of the gulf fixed between them. Wartime work on the 41-hour week for civil servants, on regional organisation and district manpower boards gave way to dealing with demobilisation and the setting up of civilian resettlement units for returning prisoners of war, such as the one at Hatfield House, where the Long Gallery served as a dormitory. His real opportunity came

in 1949, when he became head of the disabled persons branch, to put into effect the legislation passed by the post-war Labour Government. This involved co-operation with many people in industry and in voluntary organisations. Remploy was one of the success stories. At international conferences on the disabled Slater was able to claim that Britain's services were the best in the world.

His reward, in 1956, was a CBE, and in 1958 he was promoted to undersecretary. In 1960 he took over the overseas department, renewing his international contacts, and he went on to represent Britain at International Labour Organisation conferences. He retired with a CMC in 1964, but became director of the London branch of the International Labour Organisation.

A second retirement in 1970 freed him to become a county councillor and to serve as vice-chairman of Berkshire County Council, 1977-79. He was in his element as a chairman — whether of Maidenhead Civic Society, or of the local National Trust Association. Courteous, firm and unflinching by disposition, he was always ready with an outrageous pun to carry the meeting with him. He married Primrose Hammond in 1928. She survives him, together with their son and daughter.

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THE REFORM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

Various proposals have from time to time been made with a view to reform of the constitution of the House of Lords, but the report of the Select Committee which we publish today embodies the first scheme that has come before the House and the country, as the result of mature deliberation by a body of peers who may be fairly regarded as representative of the opinion of the House at large.

The aim is to bring into the House of Lords as many men as possible who have proved themselves wise and capable leaders of men, and to secure through the representative peers that continuity of tradition and that position within the Constitution which are exceedingly difficult to secure for a completely novel creation. It is proposed accordingly that 200 peers shall be chosen by the whole body of Peers whether of England, Ireland, Scotland, or the United Kingdom, to represent them in the House of Lords. It is suggested that the election should be by a sort of cumulative vote, each hereditary peer having as many votes as there are representatives, and being at liberty to divide them as he pleases. It is not believed that the arrangement would lead to the party

ON THIS DAY

December 4, 1908

If these proposed reforms had been in operation in 1908 the controversy on the Budget of that year and the consequent Parliament Bill (On this Day, Dec 11) might have been avoided. The House of Lords then had 592 members; now there are 762 hereditary peers and 435 life peers/peeresses.

Wirepulling which was suggested as a possible objection. These representative peers would sit for the duration of a Parliament, not for life so that there would be an opportunity to vary the representative element in both Houses with equal frequency. This arrangement, it may be mentioned, does not touch the prerogative of the Crown to create hereditary peerages. It merely reduces the number of hereditary peers entitled to legislate, and to bear the title of a Lord of Parliament. Then there is a long list of qualifications enabling peers to sit as of right without election. They may be summarized as intended to open a wide door to personal merit or distinction in

the public service. The two Archbishops are to sit by right during their tenure of their sees, but the rest of the episcopate are to choose eight of their number to represent them. Finally there are to be life peers, not exceeding 40 in number, not more than four to be created in any one year. Their creation gives the opportunity to bring to the service of the country men of ability who do not meet the conditions of admission to the House previously indicated.

It is computed that under this scheme the House of Lords would consist of something under 400 members, made up thus: Three peers of the blood royal, 200 representative peers elected for one Parliament, 130 qualified hereditary peers, 10 spiritual peers, 5 Lords of Appeal in ordinary, and life peers gradually brought up to, but not exceeding, 40. The House of Lords would thus be reduced to about two-thirds of its present nominal strength. Only one-half of it would represent the hereditary principle pure and simple, and that half would be placed under conditions tending to stimulate reliance upon something more than hereditary right. The other half of the House would represent personal merit, character, distinction, or eminent public services, whether in an official or a non-official capacity...

NEWS

Beef on bone banned over CJD

■ The traditional roast rib of beef, T-bone steak and even Oxo gravy are set to disappear from British dinner tables after the Government's surprise decision to ban the sale of beef on the bone because of a "very small" risk that it could cause Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.

The move dealt a fresh hammer blow to a farming industry that was slowly recovering from the "mad cow" disease crisis, and brought gloom to butchers, cooks and families looking forward to their big Christmas joint. Pages 1, 6

Gas U-turn to save coal jobs

■ Tony Blair announced a halt to the building of gas-fired power stations in a move to ease the crisis in the coal industry. In a surprising U-turn, the Prime Minister said he had acted to preserve the coal industry. Page 1

Doctors' power

The NHS drugs bill will be capped and most of the £35 billion health budget transferred into the hands of family doctors under the Government's shake-up of the health service. Page 1

Opera reprieve

The Government granted a temporary reprieve to the embattled board of the Royal Opera House after it was told to resign by an MPs committee. Pages 1, 10, 11

Irish tax cuts

Irish tax payers and social welfare recipients are to benefit from the largest give-away budget ever announced in Ireland. Page 2

Cutting revenge

A man who suspected his wife of having an affair took revenge with a play previously adopted by scorned women — he cut up all her clothes with a pair of scissors. Page 3

Spencer divorce

The marriage of Earl Spencer and his wife was ended in just six minutes in a South African courtroom. The judge granted a divorce decree that included a settlement of £1.8 million for Countess Spencer. Page 5

Cleared of murder

Twenty-five years after a teenage soldier confessed to murder because he dreamt of the dead schoolgirl's face, the Court of Appeal has set him free. Page 7

Gorbachev sings for his TV supper

■ Mikhail Gorbachev is to follow Pamela Anderson and Damon Hill by singing the praises of the pizza. He has accepted more than £100,000 to star in a Pizza Hut TV advertising campaign, which he has filmed in Moscow. The former Soviet leader has said that he will use the fee to help to establish a home for his *Perestroika* library. Page 3

Addictive drugs

Anti-depressant drugs such as Prozac could prove as addictive as tranquillisers such as Valium, according to a study by the medical consumer group Social Audit. Page 8

Global warming

Graphic evidence of the deadly effect of global warming in a remote corner of Central America has been presented to a world summit on climate. Page 9

Warfare gold

Britain and France rejected calls by Jewish leaders to open the files of the Tripartite Gold Commission to see whether the Allies knowingly restored tainted gold to liberated countries. Page 14

Russian arms cuts

President Yeltsin announced that he planned to cut Russian ground and naval forces by 40 per cent from January 1, 1999. Page 15

Landmine ban

Joined into action by a Nobel Prize-winning campaign, Britain and scores of other nations signed an international ban on landmines. Page 17

Mandela case

The former head of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's bodyguard said that she ordered the killing of several township activists while having an affair with a white policeman of the Special Branch. Page 19



Pele, who yesterday received an honorary knighthood, and President Cardoso of Brazil with youngsters from Compton Manor School, London

BUSINESS

Savings: The Government is trying to escape further criticism of its Isas by producing a lower estimate for the numbers of investors adversely affected. Page 27

South Korea: Britain will join other G7 developed countries in backing a \$55 billion rescue package for the vital economy. Page 27

Economy: The Bank of England met for its interest rate discussion amid evidence that the booming services sector has lost some steam and that retailers suffered a poor month in November. Page 27

Markets: The FTSE 100 lost 6.9 to close at 4970.7. Sterling's trade-weighted index fell from 105.4 to 105.3 after a rise from \$1.6821 to \$1.6836 but a fall from DM2.9846 to DM2.9773. Page 30

SPORT

Rugby union: With injuries to key players, Clive Woodward had to delay the naming of the England team for the second international against the All Blacks. Page 52

Football: Alan Shearer, out of the game through injury since August, expects to be fit in time to take his place in the England squad for the World Cup finals. Page 52

Cricket: Courtney Walsh, the captain, and Clive Lloyd, the manager, were highly critical of West Indies' performance as they suffered a second successive innings defeat by Pakistan. Page 50

Tennis: John McEnroe and Bjorn Borg lead a cast of legends that should enthral spectators at the Albert Hall for the Senior Tour of Champions. Page 48

ARTS

Young guns: A confident new breed of writer-directors is snapping at the heels of the moguls and producing some of Hollywood's hottest new movies. Page 40

Sly triumph: Geoff Brown watches Sylvester Stallone's lazy sheriff take on acting heavyweight Robert De Niro in *Cop Land* and win the week's new movies. Page 41

Old soldiers: Written by Stephen Churche and starring George Cole and Tim Pigott-Smith, *Heritage* should have had Benedict Nightingale gripped. What went wrong? Page 42

Late arrival: Benjamin Britten and W.H. Auden's early collaboration, *Paul Bunyan*, which languished for decades, finally gets a Royal Opera premiere. Page 43

Your health: Dr Thomas Stuttaford reports on cardiac arrest, birth weight, the benefits of walking, and identifying corpses. Page 20

Lone struggle: Freezing payments for single parents places a huge burden on them, says lone mother Alison Miller. Page 21

Rattling the tin: How the charities manage finances in the face of tax reforms. Page 36, 37

Best buys: A traditional Christmas in rural Yorkshire, skiing in a duty-free resort, a last-minute break in the Caribbean. Page 39

Reviews: Raymond Seitz enjoys Thomas Jefferson's Parisian adventure, Peter Ackroyd hails London's chaotic beauty, Nicholas Wapshott sniffs out the authors of Groucho's best lines. Pages 44, 45

The dynamism of the 40,000 French people who work in silicone valley in California must be saluted. As must the courage of those young people who in growing numbers will boost the colony of 100,000 in London. But is this emigration of the best not a sign of a blocked society? — *Le Figaro*

Preview: What should we believe about global warming? *Scare Stories* (BBC2, 9.25pm). *Reviews:* Underneath the arches... Pages 50, 51

Tales of Kaufman

Operas are supposed to be melodramatic, select committees are not. Unfortunately Gerald Kaufman's report on the Royal Opera House is as overblown as the death scene from *Manon Lescaut* — and hard to take seriously. Page 23

Tiger Balm

South Korea has great strengths; it is right for the rest of the world to provide the help they need to rediscover them. Page 23

Done to a T

After every new scare beef consumption has dipped. But the panic passes and beef returns. So it is sure to be again. Page 23

WILLIAM REES-MOGG

At this point of disaster in Covent Garden, everything needs to be rethought, but the old sources of funding, built up over many years, cannot be discarded. Page 22

TONY BLAIR

The Kyoto climate change conference. We will do our bit. Other countries must do theirs. So must every individual. Page 22

PETER RIDDELL

There is a sense in which the centre is divided with Mr Blair as chairman of new Labour and Mr Brown as the hard-driving chief executive. Page 13

JOHN BRYANT

How is it that when more girls and women than ever are taking part in a wider range of sports than ever, the woman coach is still the rarest of sporting oddities? Page 48

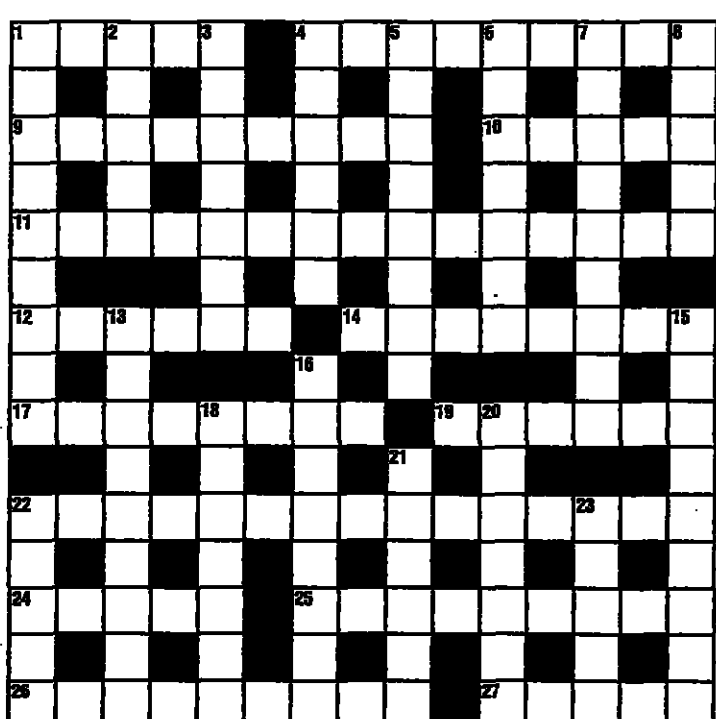
CONTINUOUS

Eric Laithwaite, professor of engineering; Leonard Lassar, barrister; Gordon Slater, civil servant; Elsie Green, theatre director. Page 25

Labour and taxes: sharing resources among schools; children's diet; cleaner energy. Page 23

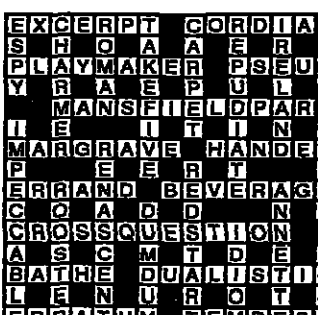
From this week the midweek draw numbers will be published on Fridays

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,654



- ACROSS**
- Refuse to see most of Irish country (5).
 - One may give camper aid when injured (9).
 - Express view, for example, in this (9).
 - Capital none preferred to Paris (5).
 - Currency dealings for au pair? (7,8).
 - There was a mountain of this fruit (6).
 - Soulful witticism? (3-5).
 - Bird starts to nest under roof (8).
 - A British queen once as community leader (6).
 - Not easy to find fine, in practical circumstances (4,2,3,6).
 - Where one's money may be soundly tied up? (5).
 - Temporarily accommodated by one on purpose (9).
- DOWN**
- Rider not effectively adding anything (9).
 - Make name in very restricted environment? Aussie can (5).
 - Crossed high above flood before noon (9).
 - Religious song turned into French (5).
 - How beastly the Pope once was? (7).
 - Easily led to include one in equipment (6).
 - Extremely rude casual worker given tranquilliser (8).
 - Officer's order (7).
 - I condemn a corrupt authority (9).
 - Chopped spice (5).
 - In extremes of terror, I endlessly imagine plots (9).
 - Start off period in government in official abode (9).
 - Showing contempt, that is, over an article (8).
 - Messenger or porter carrying letters (7).
 - Nobleman losing ring in London borough (7).
 - Not so bad, I'll wager (6).
 - Sum for workers limited by cap (3,2).
 - Federation heading off trouble that's about (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,653



Times Two Crossword, page 52

AN INFORMATION

Latest Road and Weather conditions
UK Weather - All regions 0336 444 910
UK Roads - All regions 0336 401 410
Inside M25 0336 401 746
M25 and Link Roads 0336 401 747
National Motorways 0336 401 748
M25 and M25 Jct 1 0336 401 910
Channel crossing 0336 401 388
Motorway to Heathrow & Gatwick airports 0336 407 305

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THE TIMES

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West Indies go
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**TELEVISION
AND
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY DECEMBER 4 1997

Coal closures likely despite U-turn on gas

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

RJB MINING and the remainder of the coal mining industry will continue to press the Government for action on the short-term future of the industry in spite of yesterday's decision to block more gas-fired power stations.

The major change of policy, announced by the Prime Minister, offers some hope for coal but does nothing to halt the pit closures that are expected to be announced by RJB, Britain's biggest coal producer, in the next few weeks.

Richard Budge, RJB's chief executive, called on the Government to offer to buy 20 million tonnes of coal from the beleaguered company at £1.25 per gigajoule. This is substantially more than the price it is thought that the company has struck in two recent deals with the generators Eastern and National Power.

Mr Budge told the Trade and Industry Select Committee inquiry into the future of coal that the move on gas-fired stations, announced an hour before John Birtle, the Energy Minister, appeared before the committee, would not stop the immediate crisis. He said: "Although we are grateful for this, there is nothing over the short term."

With unions expecting imminent pit closures, he said: "We will not be able to run the business at a loss." Mr Budge called for Government intervention to tide over the company, which has been hit by a falling market and now has a massive problem with overcapacity. He said: "Why doesn't the Government give us an

order for 20 million tonnes for the next two years at £1.25 a gigajoule." If he could secure orders for that coal at higher prices than the Government could have the cash difference.

But Mr Birtle had previously told the committee that he was unable to help coal in the short term. He said: "I don't control the short term. I am not negotiating with power stations." He said: "We have done everything we can... we can't turn back old clocks."

Yesterday's U-turn was the fourth Government move to address the industry crisis after mounting pressure over the consequences of a fall-out from pit closures and thousands of redundancies.

It was only a few weeks ago that the Department of Trade and Industry ordered an inquiry into the pool, the electricity trading market. Two weeks ago, as the pressure over coal increased, Mr Birtle ordered a review into so-called "sweetheart deals" between regional electricity companies

and the gas-fired generators. Last week the Cabinet ordered a review into medium-term prospects for coal in which Richard Caborn, Minister for the Regions, has a key role.

Pat Carragher, general secretary of the British Association of Colliery Managers, said the halt on gas-fired stations was unlikely to assuage industry calls for immediate action. He said: "We welcome this move and it sends a signal about the long-term future for coal but it doesn't help the immediate situation. It is significant that the timing of the announcement came before the minister appeared at the committee but after the unions and the industry association had given evidence so they had no opportunity to comment."

The block on new gas-fired stations, which addresses inconsistent demands from the coal industry, came after the select committee had heard unions' fears over the immediate future of the industry and after the electricity generators had dismissed ways to support coal in the short term by measures such as stockpiling.

National Power, PowerGen and Eastern said that they already had more than 13 million tonnes in stocks between them. Stockpiling would only add to the longer-term problems once those stocks had to be run down, they said.

RJB is negotiating its last major contracts with PowerGen. PowerGen told the committee that prices must be competitive but that it was "optimistic" about the talks.



Budge: purchase plea



The Monetary Policy Committee at yesterday's meeting at the Bank of England

Services and sales lose impetus

By Janet Bush, Economics Editor

THE Bank of England met yesterday for its monthly interest rate discussion amid evidence that the booming services sector has lost some steam and retailers reported that November had been a very disappointing month on the high street.

The British Retail Consortium's monthly sales monitor published on Monday is expected to show that November retail sales were down on November last year, with most sectors surprisingly weak.

A BRC spokeswoman said: "A lot of our members are

saying 'What's happened to Christmas?'"

Anecdotal evidence of a poor month on the high street coincided with the latest report on service industries from the Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply which showed a slowdown in the pace of expansion in November.

The sector remains buoyant with one in four companies reporting an increase in activity during the month and only 10 per cent seeing a decline. Employment continues to expand.

But Peter Thomson, Direc-

tor-General of the CIPS, said that competition was becoming increasingly fierce and that, for the first time since November 1996, firms had been unable to raise their prices charged at a time when their costs continued to rise.

Service sector firms remain confident about their prospects but levels of confidence are lower than they were earlier in the year.

The City is not expecting the MPC to signal another rise in interest rates when its two-day meeting ends today.

Commentary, page 29

South Korea signs rescue deal

By Alasdair Murray, Economics Correspondent

THE International Monetary Fund yesterday concluded its largest rescue package, offering South Korea up to \$55 billion (£33 billion) in loans to help to solve its debt problems.

After signing a letter of intent with the IMF, Lim Chang Yeul, the Finance Minister, apologised publicly to his country for the Government's handling of the world's eleventh-largest economy.

However, he added that the economy would have to bear pain "to revive and to recover our lowered credibility in the world financial society."

The IMF will provide \$21 billion in standby credits over the next three years. The World Bank will supply a further \$10 billion and the Asian Development Bank \$4 billion with the balance expected to come from individual countries.

Britain is prepared to supply \$125 billion. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, said the money would only be made available if "unanticipated circumstances" created the need to supplement money provided from institutional sources.

The IMF is expected to demand that South Korea raises interest rates to cut economic growth to about 2.5 per cent. The country is also likely to be forced to liquidate a number of banks, liberalise its financial markets and launch a restructuring of the chaebol — the conglomerates.

Belt-tightening by South Korean companies has already been felt in the UK. Samsung is shelving plans for a £450 million electronics plant expansion in Teesside while Hyundai is delaying part of its £3 billion investment in Scotland.

BUSINESS TODAY

FTSE 100	4970.2	(-6.9)
Yield	3.28%	
FTSE All share	2341.85	(-0.03)
Nikkei	16866.51	(-824.78)
New York		
Dow Jones	7870.08	(-45.74)*
S&P Composite	957.17	(-4.51)*

Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	101 1/2%	(101 1/2%)
Yield	5.91%	(5.94%)

3-mth Interbank	7 1/4%	(7 1/4%)
Libor long gilt	11 1/4%	(11 1/4%)
Libor long gilt	11 1/4%	(11 1/4%)

New York		
\$	1.6847*	(1.6815)

London		
DM	1.6839	(1.6823)
DM	2.5777	(2.5854)
FF	5.5666	(5.5625)
SP	2.4041	(2.4025)
Yen	216.50	(216.40)
£ Index	105.3	(105.4)

US\$		
DM	1.7855*	(1.7775)
FF	5.5150*	(5.5480)
SP	1.4273*	(1.4340)
Yen	128.67*	(128.61)
£ Index	107.5	(107.7)

Tokyo close Yen	128.72	
Brent 15-day (Feb)	\$18.20	(\$18.20)

London close	\$292.45	(\$294.35)
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* denotes midday trading price

Job numbers

The Government has tried to reconcile a long standing problem with the job figures where two different methods of calculation produce vastly different answers. Page 28

Goodwill

New rules published by the Accounting Standards Board will make it harder for companies to hide the poor performance of acquisitions. Page 32, Graham Searjeant, 31 Accountancy, 33

Isa limits 'affect fewer savers'

By Anne Ashworth and Andrew Pierce

THE Government attempted yesterday to deflect growing criticism of its individual savings account (Isa) by producing a new, substantially lower estimate for the numbers of investors adversely affected by the proposals.

The proposed terms and conditions for the Isa, which will replace personal equity plans (Peps) and tax exempt special savings accounts (Tessas) in April 1999, have been called an attack on the prudent savers of middle Britain. A Downing Street spokes-

man said that between 350,000 and 450,000 would be hit by the £50,000 ceiling on the amount that can be transferred from Peps into the new accounts. At a briefing on Tuesday it was said that an estimated 750,000 had Peps holdings above the £50,000 limit and would suffer extra tax as a result. However, 750,000 was described yesterday as "totally ludicrous" by Downing Street.

The new estimate is based on 10-15 per cent of all Peps holders who total some three

million. But Virgin Direct called on the Government to rethink the £50,000 limit. It also deplored the inclusion of life insurance. Rowan Gormley, of Virgin Direct, said: "The inclusion of life insurance in Isas can only be of benefit to the insurance industry. The last thing we want is for the Isa to turn into the insurance stitch-up account."

William Hague, the Leader of the Opposition, challenged Tony Blair to scrap the new limit. He added: "Wasn't it a bit rich for a Minister [Geof-

frey Robinson] who has got £12 million in tax-free offshore trusts to introduce a new tax for people who have worked all their lives to build up much smaller sums?"

Mr Blair said that those with money in Peps and Tessas were protected to April 1999. He added: "The announcement that was made on Tuesday is good news for middle Britain. There will be six million extra savers as a result."

Commentary, page 29

Talks start on Hambros Bank

By Paul Durman

HAMBROS, the City banking group, is talking to a number of potential purchasers for some or all of the business of Hambros Bank.

Hambros made its statement after reports that Générale Bank, a large Belgian lender, was in takeover talks. However, Générale made clear it is only interested in the commercial banking arm.

Schroders, the investment bank appointed by Hambros to review ways of ending its lacklustre performance, is examining the expressions of interest from would-be purchasers.

Hambros said the talks do not involve Hambros Countrywide, the estate agency business, and Hambros Insurance Services.

Nor has there been any proposal for a takeover of Hambros as a whole.

Générale Bank said it was keen to expand its commercial lending to small and medium-sized firms in the UK.

Shares in Hambros, which issued its statement shortly before the end of trading, dipped 1 1/2 p to 265 1/2 p.

Commentary, page 29

Tempus, page 30

Gala falls flat for Bass

By Dominic Walsh

BASS, the brewing and leisure group, yesterday reported a 29 per cent drop in annual pre-tax profits to £477 million after taking a £177 million hit against the value of its Gala bingo division. It refused to comment on reports that Gala is to be sold.

The total bill for exceptional items in the year to September 30 came to £237 million after the group was forced to make a £25 million provision against the cost of closing two

of its smaller breweries. The Government's decision to block its takeover of Carlsberg-Tetley produced a further loss of £35 million.

However, Sir Ian Prosser, chairman, said Gala's position had now been stabilised and Bass's £2 billion war chest meant that it is in a position to "grasp opportunities when they become available at the right price".

Holiday Inn reported operating profits 7 per cent lower

at £181 million after the effect of sterling and the sale of 60 hotels, while Bass Taveras was 12 per cent ahead at £315 million. Brewing raised profits 7 per cent to £168 million.

Earnings per share before exceptional items rose 10.1 per cent to 55.5p and the final dividend of 19.2p, payable on February 9, makes 27.5p (25.0p).

War chest, page 28
Tempus, page 30
City Diary, page 31



Prosser: £2 billion war chest

PC makers face law fight over 2000 bug

By Chris Ayres

LEGAL ACTION against UK computer manufacturers over the millennium bug looked increasingly likely yesterday, after Computer Weekly revealed that PC makers in the US are facing a \$5 billion (£3 billion) claim from a Californian law firm.

The case, being prepared by Hancock Raftery and Burnshott, aims to compensate owners of computers that cannot read the date 2000. The

worldwide cost of fixing the problem — which threatens to throw IT-dependent economies into chaos — is thought to be more than £400 billion, with the cost to the UK being £31 billion.

In the US, a law firm can bring an action itself, taking up to a third of the award if it wins. If the millennium case succeeds, the bulk of the award would be held in a trust for the estimated five million computer owners affected by the problem in California.

Chris Ryan, a partner in Norton

Rose, the City law firm, said that the case could provoke similar actions in the UK. "That case is unlikely to be replicated in that form," he said. "It would be individual buyers that would take action. But, if systems fail, there will undoubtedly be litigation."

IBM, the computer manufacturer most likely to be affected by legal action over the millennium bug, refused to comment on the implications of the case. Dixons, the UK electronics retailer and a leading PC supplier, also

declined to comment on how the action could affect its business.

Phil Hubble, head of Dell Computer in Europe, said that it was offering free upgrades to customers affected by the problem — regardless of when they bought the system — but admitted that companies with complex systems could be hit by long upgrading work. "I can't argue with that," he said. "But from Dell's perspective we're doing everything we can to make sure our customers are not affected by the millennium."

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Regis Lemaître is Bars Manager of the Old Course Hotel, St. Andrews.

A lot of



(pass)

+



(balance)

+



(orange)

+



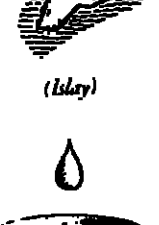
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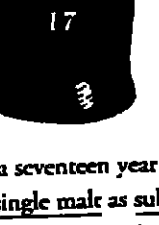
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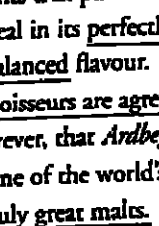
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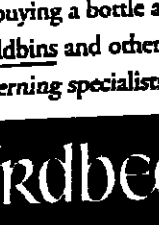
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Add Queens Moat to the Bass hitlist

Dominic Walsh looks at how Sir Ian Prosser may choose to spend some of his war chest

SIR Ian Prosser, chairman of Bass, is in the enviable position of having a £2 billion war chest, but in the wake of his failure to snare Carlsberg-Tedley or William Hill the question of what he will buy remains a cause for concern.

Commentators have thrown up a host of names — First Leisure, Stakis, Inter-Continental Hotels and Rank — but somehow none seems to have that ring of truth about it.

At yesterday's results presentation, Sir Ian refused to comment on market speculation. However, he did confirm that acquisitions were very much on the agenda, albeit at the right price.

It seems clear that beer and hotels are the main focus for potential acquisitions. Despite a setback over attempts to establish a dominant position in the Czech market, Sir Ian is excited by opportunities the Continent affords and

the Czech Republic will be used as the basis for a push into eastern Europe.

On the hotels side, Bass is already a world player through its largely franchised Holiday Inn chain, but the frustration has been trying to translate the American passion for franchising to Europe. Its Europe, Middle East and Africa region contributed profits of just \$50 million compared with \$178 million for the Americas.

Sir Ian, who is also keen to develop the chain's Asia-Pacific presence, said he was prepared to invest in buying groups as well as individual hotels. The problem is the lack of available

hotel groups, with Inter-Continental and SAS Hotels among the few that appear to be available. The difficulty with SAS is that it owns relatively few of its hotels and in any case already has a franchise agreement with America's Radisson Hotels. And Sir Ian's comment yesterday that "we wouldn't want to be in the luxury end of the market" tends to knock the Inter-Continental theory on the head.

One candidate that has escaped attention, probably because of its high-profile financial problems, is Queens Moat Houses, which has 50 hotels in the UK and 70 in five continental

countries. All are the right quality and a handful already operate under the Holiday Inn franchise. Even if he wanted to, Sir Ian cannot dispute the rationale for a move on QMH, as it is something he has looked at before.

In 1992, shortly before QMH's collapse, Sir Ian entered negotiations with the QMH board. The proposal was that Bass would take a significant shareholding in QMH which would then assume the Holiday Inn franchise for Northern Europe. QMH's financial difficulties ensured the deal was not consummated, but the potential is surely still there. Although QMH has debts of nearly £1 billion, a refinancing is inevitable and QMH's banks would be bound to consider carefully an offer of, say, 70p in the pound for the debt. With £2 billion to spend, it is an acquisition Bass could easily digest.

Labour Force Survey given nod as official jobs measure

By Philip Bassett
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Government today makes a significant switch in the way that jobs are measured in Britain, which suggests the real level of employment in Britain is higher than had been thought.

The move is the latest attempt by Whitehall officials to close the gap between two official ways of counting jobs.

Employment is usually measured by a survey of employers registered for VAT or with Paye systems, counting the jobs they say they have. But a gap opened up between this so-called employee in employment measure (EIE), and employment as measured by the quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS).

At one point in the mid-1990s, when unemployment was falling rapidly, there was a clear divergence between the two main measures of jobs, with the EIE count showing employment still falling, while under the LFS measure the number of jobs was increasing.

The Government's Budget and other calculations still use



Cleaners are excluded from the EIE official measure of numbers in employment

the EIE measure, but a new analysis published today by the Office for National Statistics concludes that "the LFS is the most appropriate source when information on total employment is needed".

After a long review trying to "reconcile" both measures,

Whitehall statisticians have now managed to narrow the gap between the EIE and LFS measures. The number of employees as measured by the latest LFS stands at 22.2 million, and by the latest EIE at 21.9 million, leaving a maximum gap of 360,000.

Statisticians say this is close to the limits that could arise because of sampling error in the two surveys. This much narrower gap has been reached after new estimates of jobs not included in the EIE measure, including 120,000 people working in private

households such as gardeners or cleaners, up to 230,000 jobs in firms with no Paye or VAT schemes, up to 230,000 homeworkers and up to 520,000 people excluded from the employer-based survey by "respondent error".

ONS officials say today in the latest *Labour Market Trends* they now estimate that between 740,000 and 1.1 million jobs are measured by the LFS, but not by the employer-based EIE survey.

Through further work is promised, the ONS says that this narrowing of the "discrepancies" is the first stage of examining the feasibility of introducing European-style labour accounts in Britain, measuring in detail the movement of people in jobs.

Britain must maintain its drive in Europe for labour market flexibility, especially as the single currency moves closer, Andy Turner, Director-General of the CBI, said at the Policy Studies Institute yesterday. There was no one labour market model in Europe, and policymakers needed to take account of the diversity of labour market practices, he added.

Genus shares rise sharply as trading on Ofex begins

By Paul Durman

THE dairy farmers who own much of Genus, the cattle breeding firm that recently saw off a takeover approach from venture capitalists, have seen a sharp rise in the value of their holdings since Monday, when trading in the shares began on the Ofex matched bargain market.

The price of Genus shares has risen to 145p, almost three times the last price from the company's own dealing mechanism, the inadequacies of which were highlighted by the

putative bid from Alchemy Partners. The Alchemy offer was worth about 120p a share, or about £28 million in total.

Genus used to be part of the Milk Marketing Board, and has inherited 29,000 former and current dairy farmers as shareholders. Richard Wood, chief executive, said the firm is keen to accelerate its progress towards a full stock market listing but is dependent on the farming industry, which is struggling with reduced prices for milk and grain.

The defence against Alchemy cost Genus more than £250,000, much of it in professional fees paid to advisers including Singer & Friedlander, the merchant bank, and Wedlake Bell, the solicitors.

Genus recently announced a 28 per cent increase in operating profits to £13 million for the six months to September 30, on sales marginally higher at £23.7 million. Pre-tax profits doubled to £2.7 million, largely because of a £1.1 million profit on property sales.

Allied Domecq to fight for gin brand

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

ALLIED DOMECQ, the UK drinks company, will compete with Seagram, the Canadian drinks and entertainment group, in the expected £500 million sale by Guinness-GrandMet of the Bombay Sapphire gin brand.

An Allied Domecq spokesman said: "We are definitely interested in Bombay or any of their other gin brands." Guinness-GrandMet, which won shareholder approval for its £23 billion merger last week and will be listed on the New York Stock

Exchange as Diageo on December 17, is believed to have agreed to sell the Bombay brand in order to get the antitrust blessing of the Federal Trade Commission.

City analysts said that the sale of the Bombay brand was a smaller than expected price to pay for FTC approval and would give Diageo a boost. Bombay Sapphire only sells 230,000 cases annually in the United States while Gilbey's, another Diageo brand, sells 875,000 cases and Gordon's sells 1.4 million cases.

FSA cautioned on super-ombudsman

By Gavin Lumsden

DAVID THOMAS, the Banking Ombudsman, has warned the Financial Services Authority (FSA), the new City watchdog, against merging the five existing ombudsman schemes, arguing that it could undermine the public's protection.

Howard Davies, executive chairman of the FSA, wants to simplify the system and is considering establishing a single point of entry for consumers. Mr Thomas welcomed the reform but argued against the idea of a super-ombudsman, fearing a dilution of existing powers.

A super-ombudsman could also be seen to be inflexible and remote by the public, he said. One proposal is to reduce the



Thomas: voiced his fears

number of ombudsmen to three by merging the investment and PIA schemes and the building society with the bank schemes.

Classic FM plays a profitable tune

By Raymond Snoddy, Media Editor

GWR, the commercial radio group, said yesterday that Classic FM, its national classical radio channel, has broken into operational profit for the first time for a financial period since its launch in 1992.

Nine months after GWR took control of Classic, the station made £18 million in the six months to September 30. But Ralph Barnard, chief executive, made it clear yesterday that Classic was facing the biggest programming shake-up since it launched as the UK's first national commercial radio station.

Mr Barnard believes the point of Classic FM is to "play popular classical music" rather than being a "full service"

station. The aim is to intensify the competition with BBC Radio 4, Radio 2 and even to reach Radio 1 listeners who like popular classics.

GWR believes that Classic can become a "highly profitable company" with margins of up to 45 per cent. The optimism over Classic's future came as GWR announced a 27 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, to £6.1 million, in the first half. The City is looking for about £4 million for the full year.

First-half turnover on continuing activities rose 38 per cent, to £35.2 million.

The company had earnings per share of 3.9p (3.7p) and the interim dividend is up 21 per cent, to 1.30p.

Societies reduce entry levels as carpetbaggers fade

Portman cuts balance for savers

By Susan Emmett

PORTMAN BUILDING SOCIETY is re-opening its doors to small investors by cutting the minimum amount needed to open a savings account from £1,000 to £100.

The society is among the first to restore minimum opening levels unconditionally in the belief that the number of carpetbaggers opening speculative accounts has dropped.

The Nationwide, the UK's largest building society, reduced its minimum opening level from £5,000 to £1 last month on the condition that investors donate any windfall gains to charity.

The Portman's decision comes only a week after Michael Hardern, the former butler who leads the Members for Conversion pressure group, renewed his attempts to force a conversion among

leading building societies. But Portman has escaped the notorious carpetbagger's hit list, which included Bradford & Bingley, Britannia and Chelsea.

Mr Hardern is seeking election to the boards of these three societies in spite of the Government's move to preserve the principle of mutuality by raising the threshold for conversion from 20 per cent of members having to vote to 50 per cent.

Portman raised its minimum opening balance in June this year to deter speculators such as Mr Hardern. The decision resulted in a 40 per cent fall in account openings the week after.

A spokesman for the society said: "This is about restoring opportunities for the small saver and giving out the message that we really, really are not interested in carpetbaggers or conversion. We are doing this purely

from the service point of view." Ken Cullen, Portman chief executive, said: "The time is now right to return to a more affordable minimum sum to open an account and I believe the Portman is the first of the larger societies to restore lower entry limits unconditionally."

Next Monday Portman, based in Bournemouth, will be offering the new lower minimum to customers within the society's operating area. Portman's branches stretch from Cornwall to Kent and as far north as Birmingham. The society has one million savers and 80,000 mortgage borrowers.

The society also announced a 0.25 per cent increase in its instant access account to 5.5 per cent gross. It is cutting its minimum investment for its fixed interest bond from £1,000 to £500.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Brokers win price cuts on Crest links

PRIVATE client stockbrokers have forced pricing concessions out of the two network providers linking them to Crest, the computer settlement system introduced by the Stock Exchange this year, after threatening to set up their own operation. After a meeting last Friday with Angela Knight, chief executive of Apicima, the stockbrokers' association, BT Syntegra has pledged to reduce its tariff by up to 40 per cent. Smaller brokers not covered by existing group deals or bulk discounts will have their connection charge cut from 21p per kilobyte to 14p.

Meanwhile Swift, the clearance company owned by the banks, has begun offering rebates of between 20 per cent and 30 per cent to some users for the second-quarter period. Mrs Knight said: "This is the first step in the right direction. Syntegra and Swift really cannot take this matter lightly."

KLM talks to Alitalia

KLM ROYAL DUTCH AIRLINES confirmed that the airline is in talks over close co-operation with Alitalia after suggestions that the companies are close to reaching agreement on a joint venture. However, KLM said: "We are not there yet and you cannot yet talk of a joint venture — it will take time yet, we don't know how long." The Dutch carrier added: "It is possible that the two presidents will meet before the weekend, but they see each other all the time."

Midshires accused

BIRMINGHAM MIDSHIRES customers are suffering high mortgage rates and low savings rates, according to *Which?*, the Consumers' Association magazine. As the building society moves towards a vote next year on a takeover bid by the Royal Bank of Scotland, *Which?* accused the society of offering poor rates to encourage a takeover. It says savings rates have not risen since May and the standard mortgage rate is 0.35 per cent higher than the average for the big mutuals.

VCI takes a knock

SHARES in VCI, the publishing group, dived from 192½p to 115½p after the company said it expects pre-tax profit in 1997 to be lower than the previous two years. However, the company said it has made substantial progress in building its portfolio of owned copyrights and remains in a strong position to continue this strategy. It added that while its Christmas line-up has been well received by the trade, UK consumer activity has not met expectations.

Pittard profits warning

SHARES in Pittard, the footwear and leather group, fell 16p, to 53½p, after it gave warning that full-year profits to the end of this month would be slightly lower than in 1996. The warning was issued after taking into account gains from the disposal of properties. These gains are expected to be about £900,000. On May 16, the conditional sale was announced of the former Pavlova leather factory in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, for £2.85 million, subject to planning consent.

SMP keen to expand

SCOTTISH METROPOLITAN PROPERTY said it is looking to have "another active year as new opportunities are sought out in the retail and industrial sectors in Scotland and the North of England". Shareholders at the annual meeting were told that the company was placing strong emphasis on increasing investment and gearing and "is confident opportunities can be found to utilise current cash balances of £18 million". The cash results from an office portfolio sale in August.

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.58	2.40	0.887
Austria Sch	22.01	20.26	0.887
Belgium Fr	64.81	59.85	3.281
Canada \$	2.521	2.333	2.67
Cypriot Cyp	0.917	0.846	12.80
Denmark Kr	11.86	11.07	317.53
Finland Mk	6.58	6.28	296.50
France Fr	10.46	9.68	7.92
Germany Dr	3.15	2.98	263.79
Greece Dr	494	455	12.84
Hong Kong \$	13.85	12.85	13.94
Ireland Pt	1.21	1.01	2.58
Israel Sh	1.11	1.07	335.14
Italy Lira	3101	2854	1.788
Japan Yen	232.13	214.80	1.846

Rates for small denomination bank notes supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

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Travel from Wandoo or Ashford on Eurostar non-stop to the French Alps and stay in the superb resort of Les Arcs. Renowned for great door-to-door skiing, a lively atmosphere and superb facilities, Les Arcs is set in a massive ski area with 150km of piste, including the Varet Glacier. Ideal for all levels of skiing, with 13 green beginners slopes, 44 easy blue runs, 57 intermediate red runs, and 18 testing black runs, including the 36km Aiguille Rouge, amongst and superb Olympic for advanced skiers. Village level 1800m; highest point 3226m.

MAEVA LATITUDES HOTEL DU GOLF
The three-star Hotel du Golf based in Arc 1800 is approximately 30 minutes from the Eurostar station and centrally located within the resort at the foot of the pistes. Facilities include four restaurants, a bar, sauna and fitness room. All rooms have private shower or bath, television, minibar and hair dryer.

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DECEMBER 27 7 £699
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Isa's slip is showing



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

The Government's big idea on savings, Isa, has been in the planning process for months, if not years. Yet she emerged on Tuesday with the look of something thrown together at the last minute, a messy combination of ill-thought out ideas with the lottery element adding the extra insult to people who take planning for their future seriously.

What happened yesterday can only add to the view that dangerously little research has gone into devising this blueprint for the future financial health of the nation. For it appears that the Government has only the vaguest of ideas about how many people are likely to be adversely affected by the radical changes that it plans to the savings structure. On Tuesday, the Treasury was professing a figure of 750,000 people who would lose tax relief they currently enjoy once Isa bursts on to the scene. Even then, they were hedging: it could be as low as 650,000 or as high as 975,000, officials said.

But the headlines that greeted Isa's unveiling were not at all to the Government's liking. All that squawking about robbing prudent middle Britain was not what was expected by new Labour leaders, even if it sounded horribly familiar to those who remembered old Labour.

So time for a little spin. Isa cannot be reshaped at this stage, but the figures can. Less than 24 hours on and there are nowhere

near 750,000 potential victims: the figure has shrunk to between 350,000 and 450,000, courtesy of a government spokesman.

"Totally ludicrous," was this individual's verdict on the earlier figures, despite their Treasury provenance. "Totally ludicrous" is a reasonable verdict on the apparent lack of research which this barney highlights. Before launching a major shake-up of the savings industry, surely it would be advisable to ascertain just how many people have made full use of the tax-efficient Tessa and Peps already on offer. Just haphazardly a guess that 10 to 15 per cent of those with Peps will have more than £50,000 invested is not the carefully considered approach that one might have hoped that Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, would have adopted. His shares in Transfex would probably be worth rather less than their current £30 million if he had taken such a cavalier approach to market research in his own business.

Yet the plans for Isa raise more questions than they answer. The closer the industry looks, the more fears it has over the complications and costs involved. The ordinary folk whose lack of savings so perturbs the

Chancellor may find the Isa less than appealing, despite the come-on of another chance to win the lottery. They may need a financial adviser rather than a surly face at the supermarket checkout to help them to co-ordinate the insurance, cash, shares and National Savings that can all be bundled into Isa. Mr Robinson should go back to the start, and investigate the current shape of the savings scene before trying to change it.

Somewhere in the region of fairness

Launching the White Paper on regional development, John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, admitted that "an awful lot of money" has been wasted through needless internal competition in the warring of foreign companies.

The English regions have long claimed that development agen-

cies in Scotland and Wales enjoy an unfair advantage because they get proportionally more money from central government and can therefore offer greater subsidies to foreign firms like Korea's LG, a huge scalp for Wales.

The spoils are enormous: the White Paper says foreign direct investment has created more than 600,000 jobs in the past decade. In manufacturing, it accounts for 38 per cent of employment, 52 per cent of capital expenditure, and a remarkable 40 per cent of UK exports.

The squabbling, which has included the Scottish chairman of the House of Commons trade and industry select committee accusing English development bodies of "whingeing", continues to damage the UK's overall international profile, even as the factory proposals flow in.

By giving the English regions bigger and more coherent dev-

elopment agencies, closer to the Welsh and Scottish models, yesterday's White Paper will remove some of the inequality that feeds the back-biting.

The Government will appoint board members, typically 12 of them, to run these agencies, and promises to make them business-led to ensure they have credibility. The agencies, which are due to take up their powers on April 1, 1999, will enable the English regions "to punch their weight in the global market place", said Mr Prescott.

However, Mr Prescott said yesterday there is no intention to change the funding formula that gives Scotland and Wales a proportionally larger slice of public money.

The English regions must now pin their hopes on the DTI, which is trying to devise a way of capping the size of any aid packages to deter the regions from gazumping each other and sparking a damaging bidding

war. Quite how it will exert control over Scotland and Wales without appearing to neuter the new regional assemblies is far from clear. If the controls prove too flimsy, the Government can expect the same sort of squabbling, only much louder, now that the English regions have been promised an expanded set of lungs.

Christmas shoppers feeling the pinch?

Retailers are a dreadful twitzy bunch at this time of year, waiting anxiously for the Christmas spending spree to begin. By all accounts, November has been a pretty dreadful month for them and they are poised to hit the panic button and launch into pre-Christmas sales.

There are many theories around to explain November's poor showing. Mild weather appears to have hit winter clothing sales. Big ticket items are suffering because many consumers splashed out in the autumn with their building society windfalls. The pre-Christmas rush seems to be getting later and later every year as con-

sumers hang on in the hope of sale bargains. The fact that Christmas falls on a Thursday, providing the opportunity of three shopping days at the last minute, could reinforce this trend. There is even evidence that canny consumers have been spreading Christmas spending more evenly throughout the year — apparently there was a bulge in spending on Christmas trees in September.

All of these appear to contain a grain of truth, but it is possible that we are now seeing the start of a genuine weakening of consumer power as successive rises in interest rates take their effect. Official figures and survey evidence suggest that retail sales are losing steam and a disappointing pre-Christmas season would confirm this. Whether the pace of weakening is enough to stay the hand of the Bank of England remains to be seen.

Neat way out

HAMBROS shareholders could soon see a neat way out of their prolonged disappointments. If the Belgians spur an auction for the banking business, then the insurance and estate agency arms could come together and shares in the combine be handed out to Hambro investors. The need for the top tier of Hambros management would vanish in the process, but that would surely not influence the gentlemanly Sir Chips Keswick in his decision.

Hostile £188m offer rejected by Watmoughs

By FRASER NELSON

WATMOUGHS, the beleaguered printing company whose titles include *Hello!* magazine, has rejected a hostile £188 million cash offer from Quebecor, its Canadian rival.

The company, whose shares have halved in value during the past year, said that Quebecor's 257p-a-share offer "fundamentally fails to recognise the value of Watmoughs and its future prospects" even though it marked a 40 per cent

premium. Quebecor, a \$1 billion printing giant whose UK credits include the Harrods magazine, has given warning that if its offer is rejected it will set up its own greenfield site in the UK and could well cripple Watmoughs's recovery hopes.

City analysts believe that Declan Salter, who was fired as Watmoughs's chief executive in August with a £200,000 payoff, could return to the company if the bid goes through. Analysts say he has

been advising Quebecor on its bid.

Charles Cavell, president of Quebecor, said: "Mr Salter is still around. He has declared his availability and in time there may be a position for him. But I'm not sure at this juncture."

Peter Walker, Watmoughs's chief executive, said he was unaware that Mr Salter had any connection with Quebecor and added that he was still on very good terms with his predecessor.

Mr Cavell would not comment on whether he will raise the bid, but played down the City's opinion that the 257p-a-share offer is an opening shot. "Maybe I'm not a traditional bidder," he said. "When you consider the amount of investment we will make, it looks a very fair price."

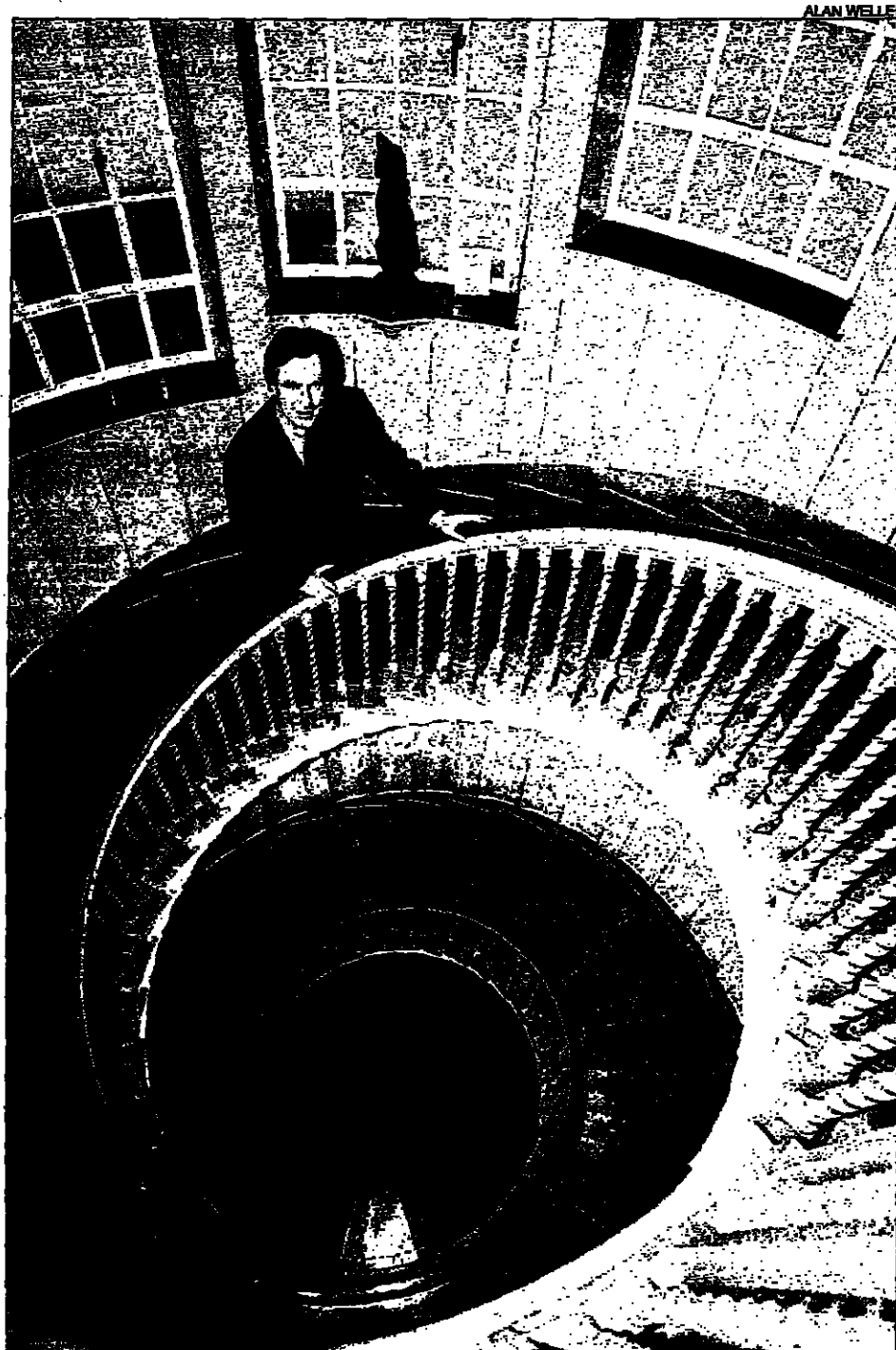
The shares soared 90p to 287p yesterday, with the City expecting Quebecor to raise its bid nearer to 300p a share.

Watmoughs is the UK market leader in gravure printing presses, which reel off magazines and supplements at high volume. It is currently heading for a 25 per cent decline in profits, to an expected £17.8 million, after losing business to cheaper European rivals with faster printing presses.

Mr Walker owns marginally more than 1 per cent of the company and will pocket £2.07 million if the deal goes ahead. Quebecor has doubled in size over the past two years. Since 1990 it has spent £1.2 billion on acquisitions and £700,000 on new printing machines. The company has already drawn a detailed back-up plan should the bid fail. It plans to ship over its medium-sized printing presses from France to a new UK site and add a £10 million heavy-duty printing press.

This would mean Quebecor would instantly become half the size of Watmoughs, competing for exactly the same market with the benefit of more advanced equipment.

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Locating new properties has proved an uphill struggle for Colin Pilgrim at Heal's

Heal's searches for sites

By FRASER NELSON

HEAL'S, the furniture retailer that joined the stock market earlier this year, admitted yesterday that it is struggling to find suitable property for its ambitious expansion plan.

Colin Pilgrim, chief executive, said the company is now prepared to compromise on either space, location or price because it has been unable to find all three in its targets of Manchester, Glasgow, Dublin and Newcastle.

He said: "We've been making very vigorous efforts to

find new stores. We are leaving no stone unturned. We need two out of three criteria to hit us on the button but so far this hasn't been the case."

Heal's currently operates from three stores, at Tottenham Court Road and King's Road, West London, and in Guildford. They made a pre-tax profit of £1.54 million (£1.8 million) in the year to September 13, after £1.4 million in flotation costs. Overall sales rose 24 per cent, to £242 million.

Heal's spent £900,000 on

refurbishment in the year, and is now working on doing up the main trading floor at its Tottenham Court Road store — which, it said, will hold back sales growth in February and March.

The soaring pound helped it to buy furniture much more cheaply, and helped operating profit by some £120,000 million over the year. Overall, earnings grew to 13.5p (11.5p) a share on a pro-forma basis, and a final dividend of 3.2p makes a total 4.6p.

ITT poised to add Sheraton hotels in UK

By DOMINIC WALSH

ITT, the hotel and gaming group that last month agreed to a takeover from Starwood Lodging, has formulated plans that could lead to the addition of another 30 or 40 Sheraton hotels in Britain.

Dan Weadock, president and chief executive officer of ITT's Sheraton division, said yesterday that he saw "big opportunities" for adding another ten to 15 Sheraton Hotels to the current total of six. He also believes that the time is right to introduce its three-star Four Points brand, probably in 20 to 25 tertiary locations.

Mr Weadock said that in the wake of the hostile takeover bid for ITT launched by Hilton Hotels Corporation 11 months ago, potential Sheraton partners had been reluctant to move beyond discussions while the outcome was in doubt. However, he expected

this to change amid the certainty created by the friendly takeover by Starwood.

Bob Cotter, head of Sheraton in Europe, said that the expansion planned for Europe would be a mixture of acquisitions, joint ventures, management contracts and franchises. He declined to comment on targets, but said that they could include some of the UK's smaller quoted companies with fewer than 50 hotels.

The Starwood takeover is also likely to let Sheraton proceed with refurbishment plans. The Park Lane Hotel, in Central London, bought last year for £44 million, is having a £10 million refit, but Mr Cotter said the aim was to exploit the site's scope for development beyond its 310 bedrooms.

Mr Cotter said: "London is the hottest hotel market in the world right now."

Rank signs Belgian casinos deal

By DOMINIC WALSH

RANK, the leisure group, has signed an agreement to acquire two casinos in the Belgian coastal resorts of Middelkerke and Blankenberge subject to approval by local authority leaders.

The company declined to comment as the deal is subject to a strict confidentiality clause. However, Belgian sources suggest the agreement envisages completion of a deal within the next two months. Local authority approval is expected to be granted at a meeting scheduled for December 11.

The two casinos employ 200 staff, but it is not known how much Rank is paying. The acquisition would put the group in a good position to take advantage of plans by the Belgian Government to put in place a proper legal framework for the casino industry. Formal legislation is said to be imminent.

Rank's UK casino business profits were £7 million in the first half of this year.

Morris to be sold for £49m

By OUR CITY STAFF

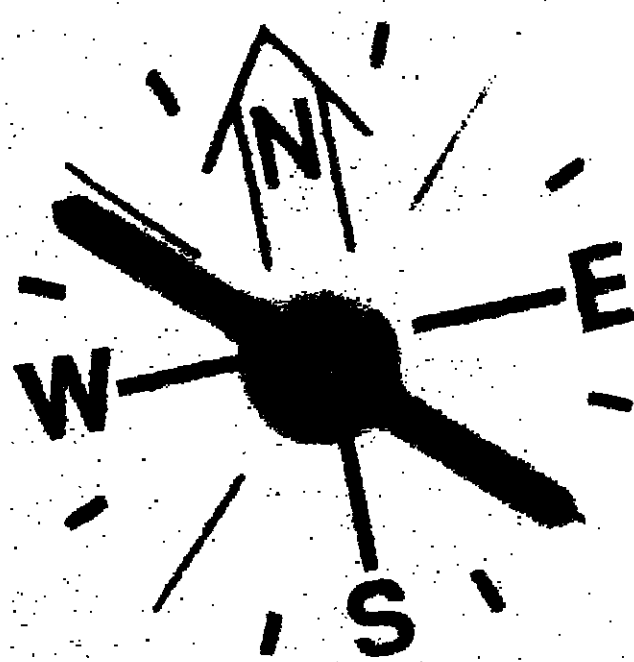
MORRIS ASHBY, the engineering group, yesterday agreed to a £49 million takeover bid from Automotive Components Investments, a company set up especially to buy the company. Earlier this week it said it was in talks with a potential bidder at 400p a share, the exact terms of yesterday's bid.

Automotive Components also said that Morris Ashby shareholders would also receive a special dividend of 6.5p a share, in addition to the 3.5p dividend announced with Morris Ashby's results yesterday. Last year's interim was 2.6p.

Automotive said it had irrevocable undertakings to accept the offer from Morris Ashby directors and their families in respect of 38.8 per cent of the company's shares. It said the undertakings would be binding in the event of a rival offer.

Morris Ashby lifted pre-tax profit to £2.4 million (£1.3 million) in the six months to September 30. Earnings were 14.9p (8.1p) per share.

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Thus far, it has been a bad news week. In the name of saving, the Government has launched a sure-fire scheme to cut the nation's savings. The remnants of the coal industry, designed out of the power network in 1988 and condemned in 1992, are about to suffer the inevitable consequences. Forecasters have found that America's economic cold war against Japan has at last destroyed the momentum of the world's second-biggest economy. And the French boss of the IMF has triumphantly proclaimed the West's defeat of the Asian economic model in the tiger countries, whatever the cost to the rest of us. Fair enough. But why oh why, as worthy folk complain, do newspapers never mention the good news, that the best travellers have again arrived on time, without mishap and with smiling faces. So here is the really good news. Accountancy is boring. Nothing new there, say those snobs who proudly claim to be hopeless at figures yet dispute their telephone

No news is good news for Sir David



SIR DAVID TWEEDIE

bill to the last farthing. But there really has been a revolution. At the start of the decade, when the powerless old Accounting Standards Committee was wound up, things were very different. Company accounts were a laughing stock and the profession was at bay. Smart finance directors and their advisers had found the bean-counter's stone: cookbooks on how to turn losses into profits and liabilities into assets. Empires were built by creative accounting allowed by loose rules, lax enforcement and weak-minded auditors. Headlines multiplied, questions were asked and ministers huffed when weaknesses disguised by lax accounting led to collapse. Professor Prem Sikka, an implacable critic of the besieged profession, prefaced his many attacks with lists of scandals. They usually included Robert Maxwell, Polly Peck, Atlantic Computers and

BCCI but wandered far and wide around a battlefield strewn with the terminally insolvent and the expensively wounded. The final initiative of the old standards committee was to re-launch a tougher rule for treating "goodwill", the ethereal missing link between the price a company pays for a business and what its balance sheet says it is worth. Having to write off what was often the majority of the price, either straight away or over 20 years, was distorting balance sheets to breaking point and spawned one of the more benign but dangerous exercises in creative accounting, the valuation of brands. The committee's proposals, though proper and consistent with US practice, were greeted with virtually universal derision. Neither industry nor the City would have it. So today's publication of Financial Reporting Standard 10,

the final word of the replacement Accounting Standards Board on Goodwill and Intangible Assets, has a special symbolism. After a cooling-off period of two years, followed by false starts, consultations, public debates and dry runs, the new standard is as open to criticism as any other solution to this theoretically insoluble issue. But it is overwhelming-

ly agreed by companies, by accountants and big investors. It will also be enforced ruthlessly and to the letter, under the threat of a company being hauled before the Review Panel or having its name made mud in the High Court. FRS10 virtually completes the reform of accounting rules set in train to end the scandals of the last boom and slump. It has been a rare success in state-sponsored, self-led regulation. One reason is that Sir Ron Dearing, whose committee had been asked to devise a better way to set and enforce accounting rules, was then asked to implement his own plan. The umbrella Financial Reporting Council embraces the views of the profession, business, the City and even Whitehall. Its decisions therefore have moral as well as legal authority. With government approval, Sir Ron also chose the right man to

lead the charge to rationalise and reform those loose accounting rules. David Tweedie may not quite be a poacher-turned-gamekeeper, but as technical partner of KPMG, one of the top auditing firms, he knew the tricks of the trade, the pitfalls of rule-making and the pressures on auditors where companies had choices. Here was a man who knew his stuff inside out, knew what he wanted to do and could count on support when things got tough. Few other regulators have had even two of these three key advantages. What a difference they make. The Accounting Standards Board moved steadily through the main areas of abuse—acquisition accounting, extraordinary items and off-balance-sheet finance—to force disclosure, stop up loopholes and limit the choices that make one company's accounts hard to compare with another.

Today, analysts have learnt to profit from the more detailed and meaningful information now available. Investors have more faith in the figures that companies report and in the early-warning signals of success or failure. The affairs of top companies such as Hanson, BTR, Saatchi & Saatchi or the late Trafalgar House were transformed by accounting reform. The UK, once laughable, is now influential in setting international accounting standards, the main new agenda. Provided the famous merger plans of big six accountancy firms are banned by regulators, as they must be, the new issues at home are how to expose companies' true liability to derivatives and how to account for company pension schemes. Accounting rules on either will change companies' behaviour, if only to avoid embarrassing headlines. The final headline test of the accounting revolution will not come until the next recession. Until then, no news is good news for business, investors and employees.

Japan may no longer be able to afford all that it wants

The country's financial system must be reformed, says Carl Mortished

Two deaths and four corporate failures. The body-count in Japan is grim, but the financial turmoil has barely begun. It would be wrong to belittle the fall of Yamachi Securities. The collapse claimed two lives—a stockbroker who leapt from the seventh floor of a building and an accountant who died of overwork—but in the context of Japan's financial sector, Yamachi was a minnow.

Already, the Japanese authorities are taking a cue from Datuk Seri Dr Mahatir Mohamad, the Malaysian Prime Minister, and are blaming speculation. Someone, they say, is spreading rumours about the solvency of weak institutions such as Yasuda Trust (linked to Yamachi), Chuo Trust, Nippon Credit Bank of Japan, and Long Term Credit Bank of Japan. In reality, bear-riders are spoilt for choice. Japan has hundreds of banks but few that can boast the support of a genuine retail or commercial franchise. Too many chose the easy route of expanding their loan books by supporting property developers in the 1980s asset bubble.

According to Jason James, head of research at HSBC Japan, the Japanese banks fail to pass muster: "If they all wrote off all of their bad debts, almost none of them would meet Bank of International Settlement requirements." The inter-bank lending market agrees. Yesterday, the so-called "Japan premium" which Japanese banks are forced to pay for short-term money, soared to more than 1 per cent for the strongest borrowers.

The job facing Ryutaro Hashimoto, Japan's Prime Minister, is formidable: in short the transformation of the country's sprawling, opaque and debt-laden financial services sector into one that has fewer institutions that can hold their own, unprotected, in



Harsh social inequalities are absent in Japan but harmony has been purchased at a cost

world markets. Deregulation is glimpsed, but the Government's immediate problem is how to protect depositors from further failures. The Deposit Insurance Corporation is almost out of funds, and the Prime Minister has promised to use public money to maintain stability. But public resources are stretched. Japan's national debt is about 330 trillion yen (\$1.5 trillion). Annual retained tax revenues are just ¥33 trillion.

Meanwhile, Japan badly needs to reflate its economy, cut the tax burden which is borne by too small a proportion of companies and encourage Mr and Mrs Honda to spend more in the shops. Where will the money come from? The most obvious source is the Trust Fund Bureau. A fund management operation run by the Ministry of Finance, the Trust Fund Bureau, receives money from Post Office savings deposits and life insurance premiums as well as contributions to the state pension scheme. The Post Office's resources are vast, accounting for almost 25 per cent of household savings, and much of this money is directed into infrastructure projects (trains,

roads and forests) via the Trust Fund Bureau. The Bureau has a less than glorious history. Critics believe that its Fiscal Investment Loan Programme (FILP) has in the past operated as little more than a slush fund for government projects of dubious worth. Loans totalling some ¥55 trillion are believed to be under water, including debts of more than ¥30 trillion accumulated by the national railways and the National Forest Service. Proposals to bail out the FILP are being considered, including big land and forest sales. Yesterday, a tobacco tax was proposed to refinance national railway debt.

Yet, this is the most obvious source of liquidity with which to massage the system. Post Office savings money will be used to buy government bonds to refinance the Deposit Insurance Corporation or to buy preference shares in certain banks. But Alexander Kinnmont, Japanese Strategist at Morgan Stanley, believes that the Government is just tinkering. "It doesn't solve the problem. There are a vast number of financial institutions that don't deserve to exist." He points to the fact that the Bank

of Japan has already intervened in the market. "My own view is that there is going to be a run of inflation." Some might argue that the Post Office itself has less than rock-solid foundations. The institution has traditionally paid a premium to bank rates, offering ten-year government-guaranteed deposits and the right to redeem early with little penalty. Run on such a basis, a private sector financial institution would run into trouble quickly, but the Post Office boasts huge liquidity.

Few Japanese lack one or more deposit accounts and, as a result, the banks have cried foul. A recent attempt by the Prime Minister to privatise this bizarre institution was scuppered when the Liberal Democrat politicians allied to the Post Office, the *zoku gini* or tribe members, mounted a fierce opposition. The failure to break the link between the Post Office and the world of political favours and government money is a big setback, according to those who want reform. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Japan has been one of the

world's few controlled economies. Its system of complex support structures evolved after the economic crisis of the 1920s when farming swept the country. Today, harsh social inequalities are absent in Japan, but harmony has been purchased at a cost, only partially accounted for in the bulge of the national debt.

Japan's international successes—the Toyotas and the Sonys—obscure the inefficiency of the domestic economy which is overmanned, overcapitalised, unprofitable and paying little in taxes. The banks provided capital for expansion, lending indiscriminately when 5 per cent growth rates hid a multitude of sins. According to Mr Kinnmont, Japan made a conscious decision to separate the owners of capital from the management of business, a strategy which has aided full employment but left financial black holes. Mr Kinnmont says: "Politics has delivered everything that it promised to the Japanese. The only people who have borne the burden are the owners of capital."

Now, the owners of capital are having their revenge on Japan. To the outsider, Japan's creaking financial system is beginning to resemble a giant Ponzi scheme, where today's depositors pay the liabilities left by earlier investors. Indeed, without the enormous liquidity provided by the Post Office, it is difficult to see how Japan could both service its debts and bail out the troubled banks. Like any government bond, the Post Office deposits are as safe as the State's ability to raise funds through tax. However, with national debt running at ten times the tax base, the State's ability to solve its troubles by raising taxes must be in question. The likely outcome is that the Bank of Japan will be forced to print money.

Japanese force of habit may provide the money that saves the day. If Mr and Mrs Honda believe that the banks are no good, they will put their money under the mattress, which in Japan means the Post Office, thereby funding a government bail-out of the system. But Mr and Mrs Honda may want guarantees if their money is to be used to rescue incompetent bankers. They will want continued full employment, a job for their son and security in old age. Unfortunately, it is not clear that Japan can still afford such things.

Mean Fiddler looks to City venue for funds for expansion



Power: famously stubborn

There are many ways to expand a furniture business. One of the less obvious strategies is to diversify into nightclub ownership and music festival promotion, and find yourself, 25 years on, with the biggest live music empire in Britain and a shop full of second-hand dentists' chairs in North London. Yet that is how Vince Power, the stocky 50-year-old behind the Mean Fiddler Organisation, built an estimated £30 million personal fortune and ended up running a bars, venues and music festivals company that is expected to float on the Stock Exchange at the end of this month.

Power, who ended up putting on such bands as Village People and Sonic Youth. The company grew gradually by the late 1980s it had a French restaurant, and had bought other venues that became places for young trend-setters to see and be seen. The Mean Fiddler Organisation opened more venues in the 1990s, but the company really began to attract attention in 1989 when it was asked to turn round the failing Reading rock music festival.

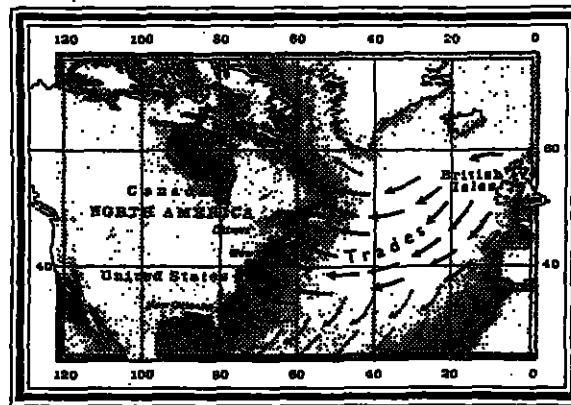
The year Mean Fiddler became involved, visitors to the festival rose fourfold, but Power found himself engaged in a fierce battle over the distribution of profits. But rather than give up on the music festival business he set up a rival event near Stratford-upon-Avon, called the Phoenix, "which I thought was a fitting name". Although the Phoenix festival was a commercial success, Power still wanted a stake in Reading. By chance, he found a property dealer who knew the

site's owner and, after offering him 25 times what he was already getting, closed a deal. This stubbornness and ability to pull off seemingly impossible deals won him few friends among his business rivals, but allowed his company to continue to grow with increasing confidence during the early 1990s. More festivals were organised, including The Fleadh, now held every year in London and Glasgow. In 1995 the company opened its first overseas venue in Dublin.

Over the past two years, Mean Fiddler has been focused on opening more bars and has also staged its first festival abroad, the New York Fleadh. It plans to use cash raised from its flotation to open more regional bars in the UK, and establish venues in America.

Power is aware that the City may not want to such an unorthodox company — "they called it a 'spiv float' whatever that means," he sneers — but is confident its flotation will go ahead successfully. However, he admits that his stubbornness means that the company keeps getting embroiled in costly legal disputes. The long-term future of Mean Fiddler is an open book. Power says, though he laughs at the idea of Mean Fiddler theme bars, "I got lost in Soho and it wouldn't have happened if there hadn't been so many damn *Prêt à Manger*," he says. "You look at one and you think you know where you are, then around the corner there's another one. I prefer it when no two places are the same."

CHRIS AYRES



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Sad start

I DO NOT know whether it was the stress of an impending takeover battle, but I am sorry to report that Pierre Peladeau, chairman of Quebecor, the company behind the bid for Walmoughs, is in hospital in Montreal in a critical condition after a heart attack. The cash offer for Walmoughs, a hitherto obscure printer, was launched yesterday morning, and Peladeau, who founded Quebecor in 1965, was in his

office on Tuesday night when he was taken ill. Aged 72, he was taken to hospital in a coma. Doctors declined to predict how his condition will develop. It seems that even on the best outcome Peladeau will not be taking much part in the bid. His son Pierre Karl, 35, who is European director of the company actually making the offer, was forced to fly home on the news.

GEOFFREY ROBINSON, the Paymaster General, met a delegation from financial trade bodies at the Treasury at first light yesterday morning, including Angela Knight, who used to be at the Treasury but now represents small stockbrokers, to discuss the deeply unpopular individual savings accounts or *Isas*. Robinson looked harried, made it clear that only the technicalities of the *Isa* were up for consultation, then made his apologies after a few minutes and bolted for No 10. This follows his equally lamentable performance at the *Isa* launch on Tuesday. As I suggested yesterday, if Robinson finds the job so irksome, per-



haps he should let Dawn Primarolo, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, out of her box to front these affairs. Primarolo, an expert on tax, has not been seen in public for ages, and fears are growing for her safety.

Bass line

THE phrase "we never comment on market speculation" has become a mantra for Sir Ian Prosser and his colleagues at Bass over the years. Sure enough, yesterday he refused to make any comment on the suggestion that he might be trying to sell the group's Gala

bingo clubs, even though everyone knows he is.

So hats off to Richard North, finance director, for his unusual candour. He was asked whether Bass might buy Merrydown, the troubled cider maker behind Two Dogs, closest rival to Bass's own ghostly Hooper's Hooch ale. "We're better off leaving it," North blurted out, before realising he was breaking internal discipline and reverting to "no comment". But then, moments later, he said: "Oh, I've started so I may as well finish. We'd like to see Merrydown remain independent and screw up Two Dogs."

A BRACE of former senior civil servants have popped up at the London Metal Exchange. Jonathan Haslam arrives on Monday as director of corporate affairs. Haslam was head of public relations at the Department for Education and Employment and a former press secretary for John Major, but he was one of those who fell foul of the Washingtonisation of the Civil Service, the decision by new Labour to follow the transatlantic model and put their own plaques in government information posts. Only just arrived at the LME is Alan Whiting, former

head of financial regulation at the Treasury, who opted to move across to become the LME's director of compliance. He turned up at Leadenhall Street along with an old friend, a large yucca plant, from which, it seems, he is inseparable. I ask the LME whether Haslam, too, has any old friends who have accompanied him on the voyage from Whitehall, but I detect a slight chill in the air on the mention of yucca plants and do not feel like pressing the matter.

TV times

I HEAR of a tender moment at the dinner that accompanied last week's Interhub conference in Birmingham. The entertainment included Jim Davidson, the comedian, and a Shirley Bassey impressionist of doubtful gender.

The impressionist wandered among the guests to serenade them. She ended up sitting on the lap of Neville Simms, the deeply butch chief executive of Tarmac — and then kissed him. Simms has threatened terrible consequences if the impressionist turns out to be a man.

MARTIN WALLER



"Two disgruntled shareholders — eighty-eight"

Russia seeks \$2bn loan to head off crisis

By OUR FINANCIAL STAFF

THE Russian Government, in the throes of a deepening financial crisis, is scrambling for cash, including a syndicated loan of up to \$2 billion (£1.1 billion) and additional help from the IMF.

Western banking sources said. To avoid the political fallout of failing to meet ambitious year-end promises and solve a growing funding crisis, Kremlin officials and bankers have met this week to discuss raising cash quickly.

"We are discussing with other banks the possibility of financing the Russian Federation at the Government's request," says Anatoly Chubais, the head of global fixed income at Credit Suisse First Boston, said.

He declined to comment on the size of the credit. The bank was one of four suggested that First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais had contacted in an effort to find an emergency financing package worth up to \$2 billion.

Senior bankers said the talks were consistent with what appears to be an increasingly frenzied search for cash, and Western sources said the size of the loan could be \$1.5 billion. "It has been absolutely clear for some time that the Government has been frantically rushing around, trying to raise cash," said one banker, who asked not to be identified.

Mr Chubais said that the country's economic recovery had been set back by six months and rising interest rates could choke off hopes of a recovery next spring.

Tax collection is abysmally low and the cost of borrowing has soared. At the same time, key oil privatisations, which were to have injected billions of dollars into state coffers, have either been cancelled at the last minute or postponed.



Dominique Strauss-Kahn says Toyota is "virtually certain" to choose France, rather than expand its plant in Derby

France claims victory in battle for Toyota plant

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN PARIS

TOYOTA MOTOR CORP, the Japanese carmaker, is virtually certain to choose France as the site of its second European car plant, according to Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the French Finance Minister.

The long-awaited decision is being touted by the Socialist-led French Government as proof that its plans to reduce the legal working week from 39 hours to 35 hours will not deter investment in France.

Such a decision by Toyota would be a blow to the British economy. Toyota built a huge plant at Derby in the late 1980s and it was widely hoped that further expansion of the Burnaston site would create thousands of jobs.

M. Strauss-Kahn said: "I believe that Toyota has indeed taken a decision to come to France. Some aspects on the choice of the site are still under

discussion, so I do not want to make a definitive statement. But Toyota's coming to France is virtually certain."

French and Japanese sources have suggested that Toyota has decided to build its second European car plant in Valenciennes, an industrial blackspot in northern France. However, there have also been suggestions in France that Toyota was looking at building the plant in Longwy, a depressed former steel town in eastern France. Valenciennes, however, is the French favourite.

Toyota has declined to comment on the site of the plant, planned to build small cars for the European market, but it has promised a decision by the end of the year. Toyota sprang to prominence during a pre-election row in Britain over European policy. If Britain were not to join the European

single currency, Toyota said, then its new plant would be built on mainland Europe.

An official in the office of Lionel Jospin, the French Prime Minister, said yesterday that France is still awaiting notice of Toyota's decision. Last week officials said that they expected Toyota's decision to be announced in the week beginning December 8.

The French estimate that Toyota's decision to come to France would mean an investment of Fr3.5 billion (£357 million) and create 2,000 jobs. Some sources have estimated the total number of potential jobs to be 6,000, made up of 2,000 direct jobs and 4,000 indirect jobs.

Toyota's arrival in France would be a triumph for the Government, which swept to power in a surprise election victory in June after it had

pledged to reduce the country's unemployment, running at 12.5 per cent.

The Government has come under fire from employers who say that its plan to reduce the legal working week from the year 2000 will deter investment and therefore run counter to its very aim of boosting employment.

Toyota is thought to be keen on France because of the size of its car market and because of its geographical position in the heart of Europe. Analysts have said that the access to Britain provided by the Channel Tunnel has made northern France attractive as a site for the plant.

It is believed that Paris has not had to resort to a subsidy war to persuade Toyota to choose France above other potential rivals, including the Irish Republic and Poland.

Japanese economy registers slight rise in GDP

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN TOKYO

JAPAN'S economy showed a slight rebound in the July-September period after shrinking sharply in the previous quarter because of a rise in the national sales tax, the Government's Economic Planning Agency (EPA) said.

Gross domestic product, the total output of goods and services minus net income from overseas production, rose a real 0.8 per cent in the three months to September from the previous quarter, the same as a 3.1 per cent rise on an annualised basis.

Real GDP fell a revised 2.8 per cent in the April-June quarter, or by an annualised 10.6 per cent. Economists had forecast growth in real gross domestic product in July-September of 1.1 per cent from the April-June quarter.

Economists said greater private consumption and capital spending were thought to have contributed to the July-September growth, as the negative effects from an increase in the sales tax on April 1 slowly dissipated. Housing investment and public spending continued to be weak in the quarter.

The economists added that exports stayed strong, but net export growth lagged behind that of the April-June quarter.

The Tokyo stock market had earlier closed with moderate losses ahead of the announcement of the GDP figures. The Nikkei average ended down 324.78 points, or 1.92 per cent, at 16,585.51. Its December futures were down 260 at 16,640.

Mikihiko Matsuo, a senior economist at Daiwa Institute of Research, said the data showed that the Japanese economy had already slipped into recession. "I think the Japanese economic recovery for the second quarter has been slower than many people expected, showing that the economy has actually been in a recessionary phase since the April-June quarter," he said.

"I expect the cyclical downturn could continue for more than two years. The reason is, we don't expect a very strong stimulative policy," Mr Matsuo added.

Greenspan says world will be stronger after Asian shake-up

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN NEW YORK

ALAN GREENSPAN, Chairman of America's Federal Reserve, believes that the world economy will emerge stronger once Asia's financial problems have been resolved.

But Mr Greenspan told the Economic Club of New York, a gathering of top executives at leading financial institutions, that developing countries needed to bolster their banking systems and open up their markets to return to the rapid growth rates of the past.

"While the adjustments may be difficult for a time, these crises will pass. Stronger individual economies and a more robust and efficient international economic and financial system will surely emerge in their wake."

Mr Greenspan said a slowdown in Asian growth was inevitable, but that this could be temporary. He said: "I say temporary because there is no reason that above-average growth in countries that are still in a position to gain from catching up with the prevailing technology cannot persist for a very long time, provided their markets are opened to the full force of competition."

"We should strongly stress to the newer members of the international financial system, the emerging economies, that they should accelerate the restructuring of their financial systems in their own interests."

Economists expect the troubles in Asia and its possible fallout in the US to prevent the

Fed from altering interest rates at its December 10 meeting. In spite of fears that tight American labour markets could fan wage-driven inflationary pressures, "Service prices [in the US]... are still moving at a pace above what one would characterise as price stability," Mr Greenspan said, underscoring that the Fed's main policy objective is price stability.

In an unusually candid acknowledgment, he said the Fed was equally concerned about the inflation or deflation risks to the economy. Deflation, or a loss of assets' value, results in a serious drag on the economy. Mr Greenspan also pointed out that deflation is often a consequence of a one-time financial asset bubble.

Aware of strong American growth, markets have been focusing on Asia's troubled emerging markets and on Japan. Mr Greenspan said the Japanese Government was "finally" acting appropriately to deal with domestic banking problems.

"In most developed nations, banking systems appear reasonably solid. Japan has been somewhat of an exception, but there have been some positive signs there as well," he said. "Banks have been recognising losses, and the Government seems finally to be appropriately addressing their problems."

He said short-term loans from the International Monetary Fund were in the best interests of the US because "any severe breakdown can have contagion effects on a worldwide basis. Contagion in Asia had been particularly troublesome."

Speaking about a massive consolidation within the banking industry, Mr Greenspan warned his audience that even these huge players should not be complacent, trusting they would automatically be bailed out in a crisis. There is a very strong bias against the too big to fail syndrome, he cautioned, acknowledging that players would behave differently knowing they were not in danger of being allowed to fail.



Greenspan: "crises will pass"

ACCOUNTANCY

Tax rules must be simplified

David Brodie says the system will not be fair unless it can be understood

With tax high on the political agenda, it is astonishing how poorly it is understood. Most of my friends cannot explain the PAYE deductions on their pay-slips, while an independent study has revealed that 86 per cent of Citizens Advice Bureau managers think their staff are "uncomfortable" advising on tax. And there is significant evidence of wrong advice from the Inland Revenue itself.

All this is hardly surprising when one considers the complex rules for personal reliefs, the special regime for savings income, the convoluted provisions for benefits in kind, and the chaotic relationship between tax, national insurance (NI) and benefits. These are just some examples from a list of 100 tax complexities compiled by TaxAid, the charity which gives free advice to taxpayers on low incomes and which celebrates its fifth anniversary this month.

Public incomprehension is exacerbated by the "paternalistic" nature of the system. UK employees have never had much responsibility for their tax affairs beyond advising the Inspector of changes in personal circumstances. Although the self-employed have completed tax returns, the Inspector has assessed their liabilities.

The Revenue's attitude is revealed in a leaflet for school-leavers: "At the end of each year

your employer tells you how much you have earned and how much tax you have paid. We will check to make sure the figures are correct... You may find that checking this for yourself isn't easy."

Indeed, it is widely held that any tax regime must necessarily be complex given its multiple tasks of raising public revenue, preventing avoidance and evasion, and achieving redistributive objectives, in a very complex world. But such conventional wisdom is increasingly unacceptable with an expanded taxpayer population, changing work patterns, the advent of self-assessment, and new attitudes towards citizens' rights.

As recently as the 1960s a married man with two children on the average made annual wage below the tax threshold. Today a person on just £2 an hour — half some suggestions for the minimum wage — may suffer both tax and NI. If tax is charged on "poverty wages", we cannot risk mistakes and so the system must be transparent.

Changing work patterns raise further difficulties. Thirty years ago most workers were in a single long-term job, and the PAYE system coped well. Increasingly, employees have multiple part-time employments or a series of short-term jobs. PAYE is not sufficiently flexible and many low-paid workers unknowingly suffer incorrect



David Brodie wants a root-and-branch reform of tax law

deductions. If these are too high, it can cause hardship. If too low, tax arrears and debt may ensue.

Self-employed numbers have doubled to 3.8 million since 1979. Some 47 per cent earn profits below £7,500 and most of them cannot afford professional advice and so miss out on reliefs enjoyed by higher earners. Through confusion they may fail to make returns and then face high estimated demands. TaxAid has saved some

from bankruptcy — and consequent homelessness and unemployment — by demonstrating that earnings were below tax thresholds. Many others receive no such help.

Self-assessment is a fundamental constitutional change. No longer can we rely upon the Revenue to review returns and sort out complexities — we must get things right ourselves. The "process now, check later" arrangements are triggering large erroneous refunds, which

may be clawed back later with interest and penalties.

Evolving attitudes towards citizens' rights have changed matters irreversibly. The Taxpayer's Charter promises to help us to understand our obligations and to be fair. Yet the Revenue itself concedes that our fiscal system can be difficult to comprehend: this alone makes it difficult to describe as fair. As citizens' and consumers' rights converge, many aspects of the tax system fail basic consumer standards of accessibility and information. While the Tax Law Rewrite project is laudable, it will be of little help to unrepresented taxpayers in the absence of root-and-branch reform.

The latest announcements by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, contain the potential for simplification, particularly in the area of tax and benefits, alignment of tax with NI, and new provisions for savings. I fear greater problems in devising a simple working families' tax credit.

John Andrews, President of the Chartered Institute of Taxation, puts it succinctly: "I start from the basic premise that someone whose income is so low as to be on the taxpaying borderline should be able to understand the tax rules applicable to him or her." I propose that Parliament should stipulate that every new tax provision is separately scrutinised to meet this rigorous standard.

The author is Director of TaxAid. He would like to hear from any organisation or individual interested in working for clearer taxes. Telephone 0171-624 5216.

Interminable tussle over intangibles

IT IS at times like this that the outside world least understands accountants. People will take a look at the long history of attempting to account for goodwill and intangible assets and wonder why on earth anyone bothers. If you take FRSS10, the financial reporting standard on the subject published today, you will find that almost a third of the document does not deal with the rules at all. Instead it covers a sort of "how we got to where we are today" narrative.

Sir David Tweedie, the chairman of the Accounting Standards Board (ASB), inherited the arguments when the ASB took up the mantle from the old Accounting Standards Committee. Recognising that goodwill was one of those topics that no one has ever agreed on, Tweedie quite happily admits that the new ASB left the whole project on the shelf for a year and a half.

"We did nothing," he said earlier this week. "It was the best thing we ever did." And, by and large, the tactics have been of a similar nature ever since. The first phase of thoughts that the ASB came up with produced so many conflicting arguments and suggestions that Tweedie suggested two days of hearings to debate them.

It was one of his best moves. The hearings, in October 1995, emphasised the need for people to air their views but also insisted that they come up with practical ways of moving the debate forward. The hearings, as you might expect, were enormous fun. All manner of arguments were put forward. The brightest accounting brains of several generations gave of their best, as did several people who could politely be described as barking. It all had the required effect. The hearings demonstrated to the world that there was no one universal truth embedded here that just needed a bit of careful codification before the problem would be solved.

After the hearings no one could be in any doubt that the answer was to simply plump for one of the solutions and stick to it. And that is what has been done. The reason goodwill drives people mad is that it encapsulates the point at which the basis of accounting argument dissolves. Goodwill is not something you can show in a diagram, flowchart or in a column of figures, and which people will accept. Roger Davis, head of audit at Coopers & Lybrand, makes the point that if a company spends cash on a factory, people expect it to show up on the

balance sheet, adding: "It seems perverse that cash spent on softer assets should not appear on the balance sheet." Samuel Johnson got there first. In 1781 he put his finger on it while attempting to value a brewery. "We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats," he is reputed to have said, "but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice."

That pinpoints the issue but also shows the difficulty of actually measuring the "potentiality". But it is this vagueness that has allowed companies in recent years to drive coaches and horses through the principles. In the heady days of 1987 some 44 per cent of net assets in the leading companies was represented by goodwill — small wonder it all ended in tears. When the Saatchi brothers were in command at Saatchi & Saatchi, some £849 million was shown to have been spent on goodwill during expansionary days. Needless to say this came to light only when the company's market capitalisation was down to £300 million. Under the new rules, goodwill will be shown alongside assets as in Tweedie's words, "a cost for which management remains accountable". And that is really the best that can be done.

Joan Brown, the ASB project director, said: "There isn't a purist solution, and that is the problem." And that is why an esteemed member of the ASB, Ray Hinton of Arthur Andersen, has issued a dissenting view published with the standard. There are as many answers as questions. The most basic of arguments suggest themselves at times like these. What would be wrong in having no financial reporting rules? People could judge for themselves, the argument runs, and the companies with the most transparent and understandable figures would be rewarded by investors and providers of capital.

The argument against that is the simplest. Remember the late 1980s. It may be uncomfortable to say so but markets do seem to prefer fairy stories that hint at riches to come.

Markets are not good at spotting realities and acting accordingly. And that, in the end, is why accountants have to wrestle over the politics and the theory of seemingly intractable problems. In the end the hope is that as a result of financial reporting rules, however difficult their agreement may be, the corporate world may be forced to behave in a way that makes realities clear and their implications and consequences obvious.



ROBERT BRUCE

Pack of cards under suspicion

SIR David Tweedie and the Accounting Standards Board have always been under suspicion of plotting that most dastardly of accounting crimes — introducing current cost accounting. This system, known as CCA, has been fought over tooth and nail by people such as Ron Paterson, Ernst & Young's technical director, who when not extolling the virtues of Patrick Thistle, the ailing but glib Scottish

football team, has his teeth gnashing at Tweedie's trouser legs. It is all good-natured stuff, of course. But the slightest hint of abandoning historical cost accounting drives some people wild. This week the ASB starts to send out its Christmas cards. Conspiracy theorists everywhere will note that the cards have been produced by a company called CCA Stationery. Tweedie claims it is a huge coincidence.

Paterson is expected to demand an inquiry.

Lost leader

MORE confusion over the English ICA General Practitioner Board's efforts to hold a debate next Wednesday on retaining the requirement for small companies to be audited. The institute's deputy president, Chris Swinson of BDO Stoy Hayward, was supposed to lead the

team speaking against the motion. It was pointed out that this line of argument opposed ICA policy. Swinson still thought it was worth an argument. But sadly he has now, mysteriously, withdrawn.

Unhappy returns

LAST week's story in this space about multiple self-assessment tax returns has thrown tax advisers into a frenzy. Most tax-

payers have thrown away any duplicate forms. The problem is that the Inland Revenue, sometimes being unaware what its left or right hands are up to, will levy instant penalties relating to any forms not returned completed. TaxAid, the tax advice charity, found one poor taxpayer with no less than five extra tax returns. That could have cost him some £300 in penalties. Fortunately TaxAid sorted it out. Any tales of double-digit duplicates gratefully received.

ROBERT BRUCE

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Small losses on the day

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES				
100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES				
100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES				
100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES				
100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	BANKS				
100	99	BANKS				
100	99	BANKS				
100	99	BANKS				
100	99	BANKS				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST				
100	99	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST				
100	99	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST				
100	99	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST				
100	99	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS				
100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS				
100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS				
100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS				
100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS				
100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS				
100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS				
100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS				
100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	BUILDING & CONSTRUCT				
100	99	BUILDING & CONSTRUCT				
100	99	BUILDING & CONSTRUCT				
100	99	BUILDING & CONSTRUCT				
100	99	BUILDING & CONSTRUCT				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	ELECTRICITY				
100	99	ELECTRICITY				
100	99	ELECTRICITY				
100	99	ELECTRICITY				
100	99	ELECTRICITY				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	ELECTRONIC & ELECT				
100	99	ELECTRONIC & ELECT				
100	99	ELECTRONIC & ELECT				
100	99	ELECTRONIC & ELECT				
100	99	ELECTRONIC & ELECT				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	ENGINEERING VEHICLES				
100	99	ENGINEERING VEHICLES				
100	99	ENGINEERING VEHICLES				
100	99	ENGINEERING VEHICLES				
100	99	ENGINEERING VEHICLES				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS				
100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS				
100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS				
100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS				
100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	MINING				
100	99	MINING				
100	99	MINING				
100	99	MINING				
100	99	MINING				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	PROPERTY				
100	99	PROPERTY				
100	99	PROPERTY				
100	99	PROPERTY				
100	99	PROPERTY				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL				
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL				
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL				
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL				
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD				
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD				
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD				
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD				
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL				
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL				
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL				
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL				
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	WATER				
100	99	WATER				
100	99	WATER				
100	99	WATER				
100	99	WATER				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET				
100	99	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET				
100	99	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET				
100	99	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET				
100	99	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	BRITISH FUNDS				
100	99	BRITISH FUNDS				
100	99	BRITISH FUNDS				
100	99	BRITISH FUNDS				
100	99	BRITISH FUNDS				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	SHORTS (under 5 years)				
100	99	SHORTS (under 5 years)				
100	99	SHORTS (under 5 years)				
100	99	SHORTS (under 5 years)				
100	99	SHORTS (under 5 years)				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	LONGS (over 15 years)				
100	99	LONGS (over 15 years)				
100	99	LONGS (over 15 years)				
100	99	LONGS (over 15 years)				
100	99	LONGS (over 15 years)				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	INDEX-LINKED				
100	99	INDEX-LINKED				
100	99	INDEX-LINKED				
100	99	INDEX-LINKED				
100	99	INDEX-LINKED				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	PHARMACEUTICALS				
100	99	PHARMACEUTICALS				
100	99	PHARMACEUTICALS				
100	99	PHARMACEUTICALS				
100	99	PHARMACEUTICALS				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	SUPPORT SERVICES				
100	99	SUPPORT SERVICES				
100	99	SUPPORT SERVICES				
100	99	SUPPORT SERVICES				
100	99	SUPPORT SERVICES				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	PRINTING & PAPER				
100	99	PRINTING & PAPER				
100	99	PRINTING & PAPER				
100	99	PRINTING & PAPER				
100	99	PRINTING & PAPER				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	PROPERTY				
100	99	PROPERTY				
100	99	PROPERTY				
100	99	PROPERTY				
100	99	PROPERTY				

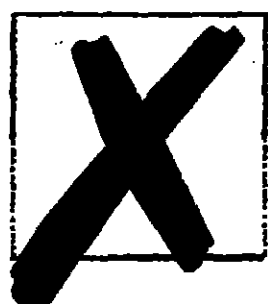
High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL				
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL				
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL				
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL				
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD				
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD				
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD				
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD				
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD				

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL				
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL				
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL				
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL				
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL				

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Rodney Hobson introduces a two-page report on how Britain's charity sector is managing its finances in the face of tax reforms

Why VAT may bring woes or windfalls

The dark cloud of tax changes has a silver lining for charities. Despite the looming loss of tax relief on dividends and the possible loss of VAT-free status, the sector broadly welcomes a shake-up in the tax regime.

The consultation period on changes affecting charities announced by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his July Budget ended on December 1, and individual charities, umbrella organisations and financial advisers have wasted no time in having their say. They knew that whatever proposals come out of the consultation will be

implemented in next year's Budget.

Russell Moore, VAT partner specialising in charities at Saffery Champness, the accountancy firm, is among those who made representations. He comments: "The voluntary sector feels it is being taxed unfairly. In that respect, the review is seen as a positive step by the Government, which has made clear that no suggestion is too radical."

The immediate concern for charities is that advance corporation tax, which allowed charities to recover tax on their investment income, is to be scrapped. Investment income

is widely regarded as the fastest growing stream of funds for charities.

Charities are hoping for a quid pro quo from the Government, with the £350 million lost from tax relief on dividends being replaced by a VAT windfall of a similar size. Mr Moore says: "Some charities feel that it is no coincidence that the two amounts are similar although there is as yet no guarantee that the sector will get its lost money back. Charities feel they are taxed unfairly for services that Government and local authorities should provide."

The main issue is that because charities are exempt

from VAT they are unable to recover VAT on their purchases. In this respect they would be better off if they were zero rated, like newspapers, which do not charge their customers VAT but can recover VAT aid to suppliers.

Mr Moore says: "As VAT was meant to be a business tax the purpose of exemption was to remove certain sectors from the tax net, but it was overlooked that they would not be able to recover VAT."

Charities can be charged VAT on grants they make for welfare and educational services. Similar grants by local authorities are VAT free. Returning VAT to charities would take the total savings on VAT to more than £500 million.

One reason why Gordon Brown may be sympathetic is that a succession of Chancellors have indirectly reduced the revenue that charities receive through covenants. The charities can reclaim income tax paid by the donor.

Perversely, as tax rates fall, the amount that charities can recover also falls. Since Mr Brown reaffirmed that he would implement his proposed 10p in the pound lowest tax band in the next Budget, the tax bonus for charities will be reduced further.

Imposing even a low rate of VAT on charity shops would be "catastrophic", according to the finance director of Scope, formerly known as the Spastics Society. Mike Forster claims: "It would force us to close residential homes and schools." Charity shops' exemption from VAT on sales of donated goods and their 80 per cent business rate discount is under review by the Treasury.

Scope has 300 shops and uses the revenue from them to subsidise its services. Now, Mr Forster says, Scope fears that a 5 per cent VAT rate will be imposed. He says: "Europe wants to harmonise VAT rates and only the UK has a zero band. That would cost us £1.4 million a year."



Comedian Rory Bremner, right, launches an appeal to help the charity Crisis to shelter the homeless at Christmas

Staff need carrots not peanuts

If you pay peanuts, can you get angels? Donors need reassuring that their cash will not be absorbed in overheads, yet charities must be able to attract talented administrators and fundraisers in competition with commercial companies.

Charity managers have received significant increases in salary levels, according to a recent report by Charity Recruitment, a specialist service for the non-profit-making sector. Pay of fundraising managers has shot up about 18 per cent in 12 months. However, this follows an extended period when pay was artificially depressed. Large differentials between charities and industry are still the norm and there is no move towards fat-cat pay in the charity sector.

Olga Johnson, chief executive at Charity Recruitment, says: "Although the voluntary sector never expects or desires parity, its managers still lag

CHARITY ADMINISTRATORS

far behind their counterparts in industry. A differential of two to one is not uncommon."

Charity Recruitment's ninth annual survey, published at the end of October, showed that a chief executive in a charity with income between £3 million and £10 million could expect to be paid about £45,500 a year. His or her counterpart in a commercial company with the same turnover could expect £80,000 plus a 10-15 per cent bonus and possibly share options.

However, Howgate Sable, which recruits for industry as well as the voluntary sector, believes charities are realising the need for professionalism, with business plans and cash flow projections. Factors for change include the need to present a well argued case to win National Lottery funds, the debate over corporate

governance, which affects charities as well as commercial companies, and a realisation that chief executives of charities need to know what is happening throughout the organisation.

Yvonne Sarch, a partner, says: "You had charities holding jumble sales and rattling tins, but the trustees did not know what the costs, profits or margins for each effort were. Those days are going. Charities need to be run according to best business practice to be effective and they have got to have professionals who know how to raise money. Charities must also make the best use of staff and volunteers."

This is all the more important because women, who are more likely than men to offer services free or at cheaper rates to charities, are increasingly finding paid work. She

concedes that "fundraisers who can deliver and chief executives who understand risk management are like gold dust so you have to have some way of attracting them". In the circumstances, she is surprised that top salaries in the voluntary sector have not risen more rapidly.

Olga Johnson says: "The sector faces a fundraising skills shortage at a time when competition for funds is fierce. The National Lottery has played its part in increasing expectations, especially where there is a fund-matching requirement but a lack of in-house experience in raising large amounts."

Charities have responded by streamlining organisation and increasing the use of part-time and short-term contracts.

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Wanted: the skills to boost income

MANY charities lack the skills they need to raise funds in the current environment of business plans and strong financial control, according to the Charities Aid Foundation, Rodney Hobson writes.

It fears that problems in securing funding, widespread concern over cash flow, late payments and high operating costs are creating so much volatility that strategic planning is seen as a luxury that cannot be afforded.

Long-term financial planning is missing in too many organisations and it is rare to find a charity that looks at least five years ahead.

Funding is often unpredictable and there is a heavy reliance on one source of income. On average, a charity has two major sources of funding and three lesser ones. The result is that probably half the charities have projects or plans for which they lack the necessary finance.

A survey by the foundation found that 57 per cent of both small and large organisations had no access to specific training in voluntary-sector finance, with 39 per cent acknowledging that they would benefit from further training. This is exacerbated by the fact that charities are often made up of local units operating independently, sometimes by voluntary staff.

Cathy Pharoah, the foundation's research manager, says: "Many of the new funding opportunities for charities are often unpredictable and short term, not least income from local authorities and central government, which is itself a major source of funding for many charities."

She was commenting on the report *A Delicate Balance: a Survey of Financial Management in the Voluntary Sector*, produced by the foundation in association with NatWest.

The report found that charities placed a high value on their relationship with their banks, which played an important role in providing help and advice.

However, cost was the single most significant consideration in choosing a bank, regardless of the size of the organisation and the scale of services used.

Morgan Grenfell is delighted to announce its appointment to manage the assets of two common investment funds on behalf of the Charities Aid Foundation.

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The real losers of the National Lottery

Philip Barron reports on the adverse effect on charities' donation income from the public since the lottery began

Changes announced yesterday show that the National Lottery Charities Board is responding to constructive criticism from the voluntary sector. In the past there were five main grants programmes in succession with limited application periods. From 1998 the board will run continuous and broader programmes. The new year will bring two main programmes with broad themes (community involvement and poverty) and there will be no closing date for applications.

This will mean that organisations can apply for a grant when they are ready and grants can be awarded when they need them.

The board also intends to improve its advisory service for applicants and provide better feedback to the four out of five grant-seekers which are not successful.

Popular aspects of the board's work include its support for less popular causes and its small grants scheme, which is being piloted in four regions and will be rolled out to all areas of the UK by summer

1998. There are to be two new specialist programmes, one for health and society research and the other for UK-based charities working overseas.

However, there is widespread concern among charities about the effects of the National Lottery on donation income.

Scope, for example, has experienced a decline in some areas of fundraising, especially spontaneous giving, such as that from collection boxes and house-to-house collections. "Our individual, one-off

'£376 million was lost to the lottery in 1996 alone'

donations have, since the lottery began, not increased in real terms against predicted trends," says Claire Mallinson, head of voluntary fundraising.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), which regularly asks the public about its giving, reports a fall since 1993 (before the lottery) both in the number of givers and total value of gifts. NCVO estimates that in 1996 alone £376 million was lost to lottery ticket purchases.

Only 5.6 pence in every lottery pound goes to the Charities Board, producing £319 million in the year



The BBC weather team raise funds for Scope by betting on the likelihood of it snowing at Christmas

to March 1997 (although charities can and do apply to the other distributing bodies, which received the rest of the 28 per cent set aside for "good causes"). These cover heritage, projects to mark the millennium, arts, sport and now there is the newly found New Opportunities Fund.

The latter is a sore point with many in the voluntary sector. Luke Fitzherbert, the independent editor of the *National Lottery Yearbook*, says: "This 'sixth cause' will take money from the other five and represents a direct transfer of a big chunk of lottery money to specific government programmes — something we were always told would not be allowed."

David Sowter of the Muscular Dystrophy Group points out that a sixth cause cannot be justified by the success of the Wednesday draw because Saturday's lottery has been adversely affected.

While the lottery can be said to have been a gain to the sector as a whole, many charities which rely on small cash donations from the general public are losing out.

Charities which benefit from other lotteries are calling for a level playing field, pointing out that they are restricted in the number of games they can run in a year, the size of their prize pool and the price of tickets.

Christine Lavery, of the Society

for Mucopolysaccharide Diseases, says that her charity, which is concerned with rare genetic disorders, has suffered less from the lottery than from the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund. "Schools that normally support us say that they are giving to the Diana Fund this year."

Persistent rumours of impending cuts in government spending on social security are causing alarm in the charity world. Brian Lamb, of Scope, says: "We are extremely disturbed by reports which give credence to suggestions that Disability Living Allowance may be

taxed. A Government that pledged not to put up taxes may now be planning to break its promise to those who can least afford it.

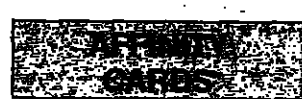
"We would be equally concerned if they were to move benefits to local authority control. This could be another way of cutting the benefits budget, as well as removing disabled people's right to choose how to use their benefit. We challenge Harriet Harman (the Social Security Secretary) to come clean about the Government's proposals."

Cuts in benefit would impact on welfare charities because people will turn to them for help that they had previously been able to provide for themselves, says Joe Korner of the Royal National Institute for the Blind. The uncertainty makes forward planning very difficult.

Cards for well-wishers

Credit cards customised for a particular group of people are growing in importance as a source of regular income for charities and also as a marketing tactic for the banks that issue them, Philip Barron writes.

One of the first charities to have its own card was the NSPCC 10 years ago. Now more than two million of the 35 million cards in circulation in Britain are affinity cards and an organisation does not have to be a charity in the conventional sense to sign up.



Normally a charity needs to have at least a few thousand members or committed supporters to be of interest to the card issuers. It will receive a donation (usually £5 or £10) when a card is issued and then a small percentage of all expenditure on the card (0.25 per cent is typical).

The Muscular Dystrophy Group, a medium-sized charity, receives nearly £2,000 a

year through its Midland Care Card, according to David Sowter, director of fundraising. "While not an enormous sum, it is regular income and it is a painless way for people to give. It also enables well-wishers to donate anonymously."

There is also a publicity benefit when the badge card is carried and shown by holders. A few cards are nationally advertised and sold to people who are not, at the time, linked to the charity.

According to a survey just published of 37 affinity groups, a quarter have earned more than £50,000 from their card since launch, and 13 per cent have received more than £500,000. But 19 per cent had earned less than £1,000.

The survey, by the partnership marketing consultancy Affinity Solutions, found that some of the responding companies felt they should be receiving more commission from the bank. Several did not think their bank had marketed the card efficiently and might switch partners when their contract expired.

But there are no complaints from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, whose card tie-up with the Co-operative Bank has yielded £2.5 million since 1988. There are now more than 90,000 holders of this card.

Some £9 million has been raised since 1988 by what is now the Halifax Visa Charity Card (originally issued by the Leeds Permanent). This sum has been shared by Mencap, the British Heart Foundation and the Imperial Cancer Research Fund.

People who normally pay their credit card bill in full each month have nothing to lose by helping their favourite charity in this way, but those who borrow through their card should compare interest rates. "They may find that another card will save them money and that they can better help their charity by donating some of the saving," says Mark Austin of the card-issuer RBS Advanta. Other factors to bear in mind are the interest-free period and possible fringe benefits.

Card issuers like donation cards because they are a cost-effective means of recruiting loyal customers. The biggest issuers in Britain are the Bank of Scotland (450 partner organisations) and MBNA with more than 500.

American Express, through its membership rewards programme, helps Save the Children and this year members of the scheme have donated £100,000 to the charity by converting their loyalty points to contributions.

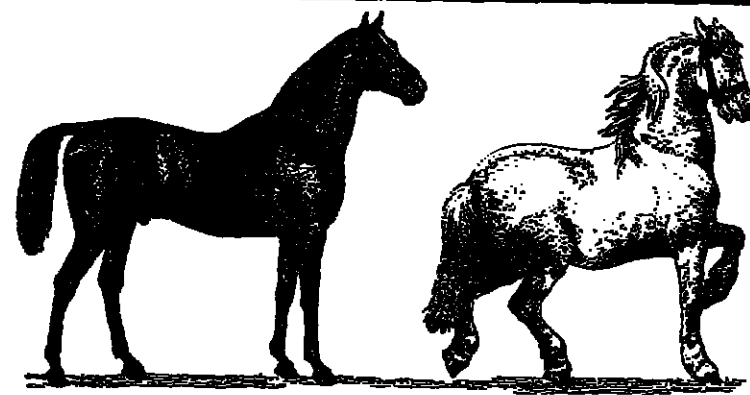
American Express says that 3,000 points could vaccinate a child against six major childhood diseases and 5,000 points would supply a relief pack for a lost or abandoned child in former Yugoslavia.

In another initiative, Amex is to auction a gold suit, designed by Alexander McQueen, for the charity at the Festival of Trees charity dinner on December 16.

One big charity that does not have a card is Christian Aid. This is partly because the churches have traditionally not encouraged personal debt but also because it is felt that promoting a card would not sit well with the charity's campaigning stance on Third World debt.

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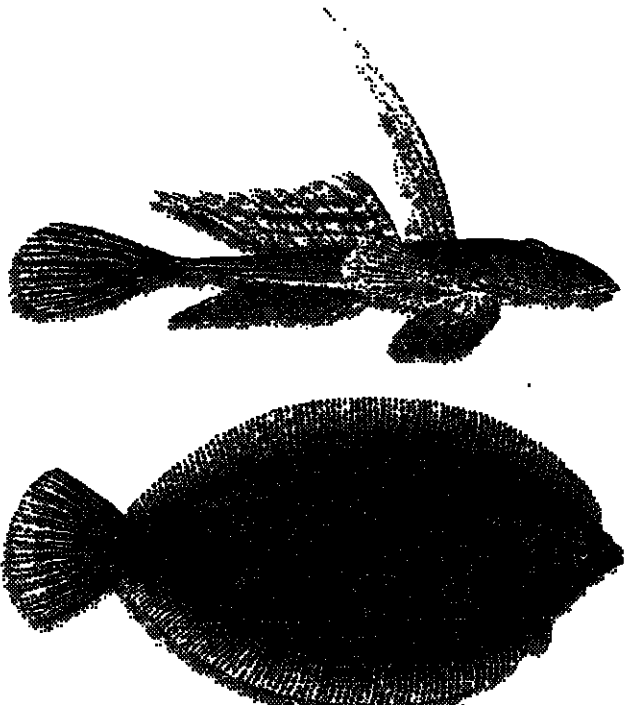


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Trust for Charities, write to: Gillie Green, Cazenove Fund Management Limited, 3 Copthall Avenue, London EC2R 7BH.



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Parents not enabled to express preference

Regina v Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Ex parte Clark and Others
Before Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, Lord Justice Morritt and Lord Justice Buxton
[Judgment November 19]

A local education authority, in making arrangements for the allocation of secondary school places, did not enable parents to express a preference for a school and accordingly did not comply with section 41(1) of the Education Act 1996 where, in provisionally allocating places to children for the school in whose catchment area they lived, it informed their parents to take no action unless they wished to express preference for a different school.

The Court of Appeal, Lord Justice Buxton dissenting, so held when dismissing an appeal by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council from Mr Justice Collins (The Times November 19) who, granting applications for judicial review by Kira Clark, Gregory Dakin, Andrew Hickman, Jordan Incey, Simon Jubb, Kyle Labell, Kerry Manderson, Faye Pritchard, Amy Smith and Rachel Wright, had quashed decisions of the local education authority relating to admit the children to Old Hall School Rotherham.

The applicants all lived outside the catchment area of Old Hall School and inside that of Kimberworth. Their parents expressed preference for Old Hall but were refused places there.

Under the authority's policy parents within the Old Hall catchment area who were content for their children to attend that school were required to take no action, whereas parents outside that

catchment area who wanted their children to attend the school were required to make specific application.

Objection was taken on two grounds:

1 That parents had not been enabled to express a preference, as required by section 41(1)(a) of the 1996 Act, and

2 That parents had not been given the opportunity to give reasons for that preference, as required by section 41(1)(b).

By the date of the hearing in the Court of Appeal the applicants had been allocated places with which they were content.

Section 41 of the 1996 Act provides: "(1) A local education authority shall make arrangements for enabling the parent of a child in the area of the authority— (a) to express a preference as to the school at which he wishes education to be provided for his child ... and (b) to give reasons for his preference."

Mr Philip Engelmann for the local authority, Mr James Goudie, QC and Mr Marc Beaumont for the applicants.

LORD JUSTICE BUXTON, dissenting, said on the first issue that looking at the arrangements made by the authority, as a whole, a recipient parent of the allocation letter had been enabled to express a preference within section 41(1)(a) by not taking steps to contest or dissent from the allocation to the catchment area school.

If such parents complied with the indication in the letter they needed to take no action if they wanted their child to attend that school, that was not mere inaction, but a relevant response in the context of the arrangements.

On the second issue, it was quite

plain that the arrangements did not enable any conclusions to be drawn as to what the catchment area parents' reasons were and accordingly that had not been in compliance with section 41(1)(b), however little the authority was thereafter required to take account of the information thus received.

But, in his Lordship's view, that failure did not affect the performance of the authority's duty under the Act, since in the case of an over-subscribed school it was not required to accommodate parents' preferences if to do so would prejudice the provision of efficient education: see section 41(3).

The authority was therefore free, in those circumstances, to ignore whatever reasons the parents expressing preferences might have given and to act without reference to whether any preference had been expressed.

It was not easy to see what the role or effect of such reasons could be nor why the authority should be obliged to enable parents to give them.

However, the terms of the statute were clear and it was not for the court to speculate much less act on any view as to the utility of the process which the statute required.

Accordingly, he would substitute for the judge's order a declaration that the arrangements did not comply with section 41(1)(b): the applicants being entitled to no other relief.

LORD JUSTICE MORRITT, rejecting the authority's submission on the first issue said that it was the intent purpose of the legislation to give primacy and effect to parental choice save in so far as to do so would "prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources".

He said that there was no evidence as to the circumstances leading up to the contact between the van and the plaintiff. It might have been due to negligence on the part of one or the other or both, but he did not know and was not prepared to infer that the collision was more probably caused by the negligence of the defendants.

As Mr Scullion had called no evidence the judge's task was to determine whether the plaintiff had established a prima facie case that Mr Scullion had been negligent.

Although it was not common for liability to be established in a road traffic accident on the application of the maxim *res ipsa loquitur*, it was also rare for a judge to be invited to determine liability for such an accident without hearing from either of the parties.

The decided case showed that a plaintiff in Mr Widdowson's position was taken as establishing a prima facie case if it was not possible for him to prove precisely what was the relevant act or omission which set in train the

events leading to the accident, but if on the evidence it was more likely than not that the effective cause of the accident was some act or omission of the defendant which constituted a failure to take proper care for the plaintiff's safety.

The plaintiff had been entitled to be walking along the carriageway at the side of the road. Mr Scullion had told the police that he was driving in the middle of the road lane at 60mph.

There had been no traffic in front of him and he would have had a clear view as he had approached the plaintiff.

The plaintiff had next been seen lying on the ground in the middle of the road lane.

Why, on that evidence, was it not open to the plaintiff to assert successfully that it was more likely than not that the effective cause of the accident was that Mr Scullion, after a long day at the wheel, had not observed him and had failed to drive safely round him?

Suggestions put forward by the defence did not amount to a plausible explanation consistent with the absence of negligence on the defendant's part sufficient to rebut a prima facie inference of negligence and a plausible explanation was "what the law required in such circumstances."

The judge had been wrong to hold that the plaintiff had not established a prima facie case that the defendants had been negligent. As the defendants had called no evidence to rebut the inference the plaintiff's appeal was to be allowed.

There was, however, an issue of contributory negligence. In the circumstances the plaintiff was negligent, making a total of eight years imprisonment from the very short up to 21 months would be appropriate: cases involving sums between £10,000 and £20,000 would merit between three to four years; cases involving £20,000 to £1 million would merit between five and nine years; cases

involving £1 million or more would merit ten years or more. Those terms were appropriate for contested cases. Cases of guilty would attract an appropriate discount.

Where the sums involved were exceptionally large and not stolen on a single occasion or the dishonesty was directed at more than one victim or group of victims, consecutive sentences might be called for.

In relation to the present appeal, it was of significance that the appellant's dishonesty had an effect in two quite different directions, on his employers and on the church. In their Lordships' view that would have entitled the judge to pass consecutive sentences, although he decided not to sentence in that way.

The offences were aggravated by the degree of trust reposed in the appellant by both his employers and the church, by the period of four years over which the offences

were committed and by the fact that the proceeds were spent on personal expenditure, partly of an extravagant kind.

The appellant's good character, his frankness, cooperation and pleas of guilty at the first available opportunity were among the factors mitigating the seriousness of his case. It was also significant that he had repaid some £120,000 to those who had suffered from his depredations.

In the circumstances it would have been more appropriate for consecutive sentences to have been passed on counts 1 and 2. In the light of all the considerations, their Lordships were of the view that a total sentence of five years was excessive and it would be quashed.

On count 1 a sentence of three years imprisonment and on count 2 a sentence of one year imprisonment would be substituted, to run consecutively.

Solicitors: Crown Prosecution Service, Portland House.

LORD JUSTICE ROSE, giving the judgment of the court, said that the appellant was employed as the bursar of the Royal Academy in London and he was also treasurer of his local church in Hertfordshire.

The prosecution case was that in relation to both organisations he abused his position of trust in order to steal just under £400,000 from his employers, giving rise to count 1, and £29,000 from the church, count 2.

Their Lordships' attention had been drawn to the effect of inflation upon the figures to which the judgment in *Barrick* referred, to the effect of *Practice Statement (Crime: Sentencing)* (The Times October 7, 1992) [1992] 1 WLR 948 issued as a consequence of the Criminal Justice Act 1991, and to the reduction in cases of simple theft of the maximum sentence from ten to seven years.

In the light of those considerations and the relevant cases which had been considered, their Lordships would make the following suggestions, stressing that they were guidelines only, and many factors other than the amount involved might affect sentencing.

Where the amount stolen was not small but was less than £17,500, terms of imprisonment from the very short up to 21 months would be appropriate: cases involving sums between £10,000 and £20,000 would merit between three to four years; cases involving £20,000 to £1 million would merit between five and nine years; cases

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Breach of trust guidelines brought up to date

Regina v Clark
Before Lord Justice Rose, Mr Justice Holland and Judge David Clarke, QC
[Judgment November 27]

The Court of Appeal updated the guidance on sentencing for offences of breach of trust by employees and professional persons given in *R v Barrick* (The Times May 4, 1985; [1985] 7 Cr App R (S) 142).

Their Lordships allowed an appeal by Trevor Clark and reduced the appellant's sentence of five years imprisonment on each count, concurrent, imposed by Judge Butler, QC on March 10, 1997 at Southwark Crown Court following pleas of guilty to two counts of theft.

Mr Jeremy Denno, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for the appellant; Mr Roger Smart for the Crown.

LORD JUSTICE ROSE, giving the judgment of the court, said that the appellant was employed as the bursar of the Royal Academy in London and he was also treasurer of his local church in Hertfordshire.

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Their Lordships' attention had been drawn to the effect of inflation upon the figures to which the judgment in *Barrick* referred, to the effect of *Practice Statement (Crime: Sentencing)* (The Times October 7, 1992) [1992] 1 WLR 948 issued as a consequence of the Criminal Justice Act 1991, and to the reduction in cases of simple theft of the maximum sentence from ten to seven years.

In the light of those considerations and the relevant cases which had been considered, their Lordships would make the following suggestions, stressing that they were guidelines only, and many factors other than the amount involved might affect sentencing.

Where the amount stolen was not small but was less than £17,500, terms of imprisonment from the very short up to 21 months would be appropriate: cases involving sums between £10,000 and £20,000 would merit between three to four years; cases involving £20,000 to £1 million would merit between five and nine years; cases

involving £1 million or more would merit ten years or more. Those terms were appropriate for contested cases. Cases of guilty would attract an appropriate discount.

Where the sums involved were exceptionally large and not stolen on a single occasion or the dishonesty was directed at more than one victim or group of victims, consecutive sentences might be called for.

In relation to the present appeal, it was of significance that the appellant's dishonesty had an effect in two quite different directions, on his employers and on the church. In their Lordships' view that would have entitled the judge to pass consecutive sentences, although he decided not to sentence in that way.

The offences were aggravated by the degree of trust reposed in the appellant by both his employers and the church, by the period of four years over which the offences

were committed and by the fact that the proceeds were spent on personal expenditure, partly of an extravagant kind.

The appellant's good character, his frankness, cooperation and pleas of guilty at the first available opportunity were among the factors mitigating the seriousness of his case. It was also significant that he had repaid some £120,000 to those who had suffered from his depredations.

In the circumstances it would have been more appropriate for consecutive sentences to have been passed on counts 1 and 2. In the light of all the considerations, their Lordships were of the view that a total sentence of five years was excessive and it would be quashed.

On count 1 a sentence of three years imprisonment and on count 2 a sentence of one year imprisonment would be substituted, to run consecutively.

Solicitors: Crown Prosecution Service, Portland House.

Jury directions on delay

Regina v H (Sexual assault)
Before Lord Justice Potter, Mrs Justice Ewbank and Mr Justice Forbes
[Judgment October 22]

Where there was substantial delay by a complainant in making allegations against an accused of sexual misconduct spreading over a period of years, it was desirable that some kind of direction should be given to the jury on possible difficulties with which the defence might have been faced as a result of such delay.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so stated in a reserved judgment dismissing an appeal against conviction in January 1995 at Winchester Crown Court (Mr Justice Buckley and a jury) of one count of indecency with a child, one of indecent assault and one of incest for which he was sentenced respectively to consecutive terms of 12 months, 12 months and six years imprisonment, making a total of eight years imprisonment.

Mr B. N. O'Brien, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for the appellant; Mr Philip Gillbrand for the Crown.

LORD JUSTICE POTTER, giving the judgment of the court, reviewed the following authorities: *Attorney-General's Reference (No 1 of 1990)* [1992] QB 630; *R v*

Dutton ([1994] Crim LR 910); *R v Birchall* (The Times March 1995); *R v Wilkinson* ([1996] Cr App R 81); *R v John E* ([1996] 1 Cr App R 88); *R v Hallam* (unreported, November 24, 1995); *R v B* ([1996] Crim LR 406) and *R v Hickson* (unreported, February 14, 1997).

It was apparent from those decisions that, in such cases, each would fall for consideration on its own particular facts and circumstances, to which the judge's summing-up had to be appropriate but comparable to the evidence. It would be unusual for a conviction to be regarded as safe in a case where there had been no direction on difficulties which the defence contended had arisen from the delay in the making of the complaints and the bringing of the cases to trial.

None the less, such a direction was not to be regarded as invariably required except in cases where some significant difficulty or aspect of prejudice was aired or otherwise became apparent to the judge in the course of the trial.

Equally, such a direction should be given in any case where it was necessary for the purposes of being even-handed as between complainant and defendant.

Solicitors: Crown Prosecution Service, Dorset.

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Dutton ([1994] Crim LR 910

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disco and aromatherapy. Details: 01305 786948.

ASSEMBLING for Christmas is just one of the possibilities on an activity break in Llangollen with Acorn Activities from December 24 to 27. Mountain biking, whitewater rafting, indoor karting and a disco also feature between festive meals in the £375 package, which includes full board at the Royal Hotel. Details: 01432 830083.

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START early but return on December 26 or 27 and you can take advantage of good offers from Sunset Holidays,

flying from Glasgow. Savings of £200 are available for a fortnight's self-catering in Tenerife starting on December 12 and in Gran Canaria from December 13. Prices from £269. Details: 01304 434343.

CHILDREN ski free on holidays from December 20 with Leisure Direction at several resorts in the French Alps. Children under ten will receive a free lift pass and ski pack when the adult with them pays for the same items. Details: 0181-324 3030.

BEER MUGS, dirndl skirts and breeches will be much in evidence during a week's coach holiday in the Austrian Tyrol. The transport, by Birmingham International Coaches, leaves the Midlands on December 22 for six nights in a hotel in Kufstein. Priced from £299, including half-board with festive meals. Details: 0121-783 4004.

A TEMPERATE but not temperance Christmas, considering the local produce, can be enjoyed in Madeira with Cadogan Holidays for £499. Fly from Gatwick on Christmas Eve for eight nights' B&B in a four-star Machico hotel. Details: 01703 828303.



A skiing holiday for the best chance of a white Christmas

LONG-HAUL

VISAS for British visitors to Kenya caused a storm of protest when they were introduced last month at £35 a head, but Tropical Places promises a refund for tourists taking a holiday at the all-inclusive Mnarani Club over Christmas. A fortnight from December 14 costs £799 and from December 21, £905. Flights from Gatwick or Manchester. Details: 01342 825123.

CHRISTMAS in the sun is still available from Lunn Poly on a fortnight's all-inclusive Thomson holiday in the Dominican Republic costing £799. Fly from Birmingham on December 14. Details from Lunn Poly Holiday Shops.

JORDAN for Christmas is among exotic deals still on offer. A week's guided tour taking in Petra, Amman, Mount Nebo and a stay in a restored village is available from Bales Tours for £718. Fly from Heathrow on December 22. Details: 01306 889923.

TIGER-STALKING in India is included in a 12-day tour with Wildlife Worldwide departing from Heathrow on

December 22. Crocodiles and bears are among other wildlife that might be spotted. Price: £2,195, including flights, accommodation and most meals. Details: 0181-667 9158.

HOTELS in America in the Inter-Continental group are offering special rates until the end of January. A room in Montreal or Dallas costs from £60 a night and some in Central and South America are available from £48. The Holiday Options offer includes upgrades and an additional room at half-price. Details: 0345 581444.

BEIJING flights are available from £318 return, excluding tax, until the end of March from Campus Travel. Offer limited to students and under-26s. Details: 0171-730 8111.

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Hollywood's young guns

A new breed of writer/director is behind some of Tinseltown's finest new movies. Lesley O'Toole meets three of them

Sylvester Stallone is likely to garner a Best Actor nod when the Academy Award nominations are announced next February. But while his performance in *Cop Land* (see review, opposite) is certainly deserving of the honour, Stallone would be the first to lay credit where credit is at least partly due: with a man young enough to be his son, the film's writer/director, 35-year-old James Mangold.

When Mangold's script was doing the film studio rounds, the first film he had written and directed — *Heavy* — was yet to be released. He was just another young screenwriter determined to direct his own script. When he heard Sylvester Stallone was interested, his first thought was of how he "could drop someone with his great physique into the story. I let it be known he would have to gain weight to look like a slab. When he met me, the first thing out of his mouth was 'I'll gain weight'."

Besides coining a performance from Stallone the like of which we haven't seen since Rocky, Mangold's script also attracted revered industry stalwarts Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel and Ray Liotta. Yet the baby-faced Mangold cannot recall being intimidated. "I guess these guys really liked the script and they brought a real respect for the material and for working with me, and for that I thank God. I felt like a very lucky man. By the time the production started, I really felt I had sea legs in terms of dealing with them."

Therein lies the key to this New Breed of writer/director. While undeniably an underdog, the New Breed is a feisty, straightforward creature who knows he's the best man for the job.

"I really think there's a difference between ego and arrogance and confidence," Mangold says. "For me, the director has kind of an evangelical role. I don't know if I'm right, and I don't know if I'm all that talented. I don't have my tongue in my cheek. I just want to make really earnest films about things, and the only way to get something done is somehow to believe in something and just give it your all. You either fail miserably or succeed beautifully."

Another young writer/director whose rhetoric echoes Mangold's has also recently succeeded beautifully in the US. Paul Thomas Anderson's *Boogie Nights* (which opens here in January) has been the best reviewed American film of this year. It has also revived the career of Burt Reynolds, and made a serious movie star of Mark Wahlberg, formerly known as a rapper and ubiquitous Calvin Klein model.

Like Mangold, 27-year-old Anderson had made only one film — *Hard Eight* starring Gwyneth Paltrow — before embarking on the one that changed his life. *Hard*

Eight had not been a happy experience, although Anderson insists he had at least "learned something about dealing with the people who pay for movies". What he learnt is that non-malevolent trickery is one of the best cards to deal to Hollywood suits. *Boogie Nights* boasts no A-list star in its cast, which prompted said suits to ask Anderson if he couldn't procure at least one big name for a cameo.

"I kind of conned them by leaving them on the hook with that. I told them, 'Yeah, sure, I'll meet Sean Penn.' But he already had his man for the scene-stealing coke-dealer, Rahad Jackson. 'I knew this movie was going to be good, and that once they'd seen a few dailies, they'd just forget about a star cameo. A week into production, they said: 'So who's going to play Rahad?' and I said: 'There's this guy called Alfred Molina.' Great idea, said the suits."

Studios taking a gamble on unproven youngsters have one last

There's a difference between ego and arrogance and confidence?

failsafe. Anderson's contract did not permit him what is termed "final cut". Had New Line Pictures disliked anything about *Boogie Nights*, they would have been contractually able to change it, even to bring in a new director. "In essence they did give me final cut because they let me do what I wanted to do. If you're on schedule and on budget, there's not a lot they say or do. And we were both."

Unlike some of the New Breed, Anderson and Mangold don't generally frequent LA's latest watering holes after hours. "This is fun," says Anderson unconvincingly, "and it's nice to read great reviews and go to the premieres, and I really don't want to seem like an ungrateful malcontent, but really the most fun part of the job is making the film."

Anderson gives a Beavis and Butt-head kind of laugh when I ask again how it really feels to be a courted writer/director in Hollywood. "OK, it's wonderful, but the things I'm thinking are exciting really aren't that interesting to anyone else. I'm thinking that maybe with some of this success, I'll be able to get all Kodak prints next time, instead of half Kodak and half Fuji. And maybe contractually, I can get final cut."

Mangold and Anderson share an almost paternal attitude towards their actors. Anderson re-employed most of *Hard Eight*'s cast on *Boogie Nights*, and has now worked with essentially his wish list of actors. "I've always known how important actors are to making a movie good, but the real thing to me is they're my friends, so I have this leg up in caring for them first, and wanting to protect their performances, and all the hard work that they've done."

Mangold concurs. "I'm very hostile to any member of my crew who mocks the vanity or insecurity of the actors. Most people should try, for even a day, having an 80-millimetre lens pointed at your face, recording every blemish, every wrinkle, looking deep into your eyes. Then that is thrown on to thousands of screens all over the world for people to ridicule or applaud, to comment on how attractive you look, and whether you are dumber in this film or the last. The level of ridicule actors have to go through is ridiculous."

Hollywood being Hollywood, its players get younger and younger. Next year might be Troy Duffy's year. It's a great story: university medical student moves to LA with his brother to form a band. After seeing one too many bad movies, Duffy decides to pen something better. He sells two ideas to studio giant Paramount and then a script — *The Boondock Saints* — to Miramax. He is "attached" as director, though he has never directed in his life. Miramax is also buying Duffy the bar he was working at as a bartender.

His immediate concern is casting *The Boondock Saints*, and he is talking to Stephen Dorff, Kenneth Branagh and Billy Connolly. He's making some of the disappointments hard. Mark Wahlberg was keen to play Dorff's brother, and the threesome spent some time play-acting their roles as Boston-Irish brothers turned vigilantes. But then *Boogie Nights* came along and Wahlberg was besieged with offers — and passed. Duffy desperately wants Branagh to play the film's gay FBI agent. "I want him to do it, he wants to do it, that should be it." But it never is once agents and lawyers become involved.

Duffy now has some direction under his belt — a lavish, self-financed black and white video for his band, the Brood, recently offered a deal by Madonna's Maverick Records — but he knows he's still mostly hype. "You know, the story is wonderful: this kid and the bar. It's a nice little Hollywood success story. But I'm not successful. When I've made the film and recorded an album, I might feel successful. The focus has always been on the outcome, and right now, I just have this overriding sense of 'Let's get this done, and get it done correctly.'"



James Mangold directing *Cop Land*: "I guess these guys" — Stallone, De Niro, Keitel — "really liked the script, and for that I thank God"

SPONSORSHIP: Andy Lavender hears clarion calls for intelligent business arts patrons at the RSC's conference

Deep breaths of creative air

You half expected Chris Smith to turn up on Monday at the Royal Shakespeare Company's conference on "Culture, Business and Society" with a logo across his chest. After all, just about everything else at the event was sponsored, from the piped music at the beginning (Michael Nyman, supported by Mazda) to the complimentary CD in the conference folder (courtesy of a concert management agency). The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport wore a plain suit, but his message was in keeping with the theme of the day: great shifts are under way in the relations between private and public enterprises.

The emerging buzzwords are "partnership" and "creativity". Indeed, the latter "is at the heart of much of what

we in this country are good at", Smith observed, pointing out that the creative industries generate around £50 billion-worth of economic activity. His Creative Industries Task Force looking at the "development of bright ideas", including the likes of Richard Branson and the fashion designer Paul Smith, will apparently make pronouncements in four to five months' time.

The UK will by then hold the presidency of the European Union, and Smith promises several initiatives designed "to illustrate how culture benefits not just social life but economic well-being and development". A new

Lottery Bill will also be proposing that lottery monies for the arts be spent not just on capital projects, as at present, but on "people and activities". The snagging point, perhaps, concerns the bodies who will disburse the largesse. Smith says that he is looking closely at "unnecessary overlaps of bureaucratic procedure" — a message, surely, that the overlapping bureaucracies of the Arts Council and the Regional Arts Boards could suffer terminal scrutiny.

Elsewhere a range of think-tanks ponders the future. The Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts recently established a Creative Fo-

rum for Culture and the Economy, with representation from British Telecommunications, the Halifax and Marks & Spencer. The Royal Society for the Arts is in the middle of a three-year programme, "Arts Matter", which addresses ways in which business can benefit from the arts. And those with money to dispense, or those in search of it, can get to know each other a little better at "The Passionate Embrace", a sponsorship conference in February sponsored by the agency BDS Sponsorship.

As this lurid tide implies, relationships between sponsor and recipient are becoming more supple. A quartet of

singers from Welsh National Opera, for instance, recently sang in the staff canteen at Cadbury's factory in Bourneville. And Stopwatch Theatre Company has provided "forum theatre" sessions for companies including the Body Shop, IBM and Lloyds/TSB. Which returns us to the starting point of the RSC's conference: the assertion that sponsors are not just benefactors, but can gain from the organisation they favour by "inhaling its creativity". This knowing phrase was uttered by Tony Hiles, chief executive of Allied Domecq, the RSC's principal sponsor. For its £1.1 million of sponsorship, Hales's company has arranged for its pubs to be visited by RSC lighting specialists, while its staff have received voice training and been taught theatre-like ways of working as an ensemble.

Arts organisations used to the cap-in-hand ritual of soliciting sponsorship might feel a little more bullish about it after Michael West, Professor of Work and Organisational Psychology at the University of Sheffield, made their case at the conference. Success in business, he argued, increases if attention is paid to concepts of "whole persons", "craft quality", "innovation" and "community". And what's more, "the arts offer the best models for addressing the challenges posed in these four areas". It was a coolly delivered clarion call.



Chris Smith: seeking partnerships and "bright ideas"

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THE name of Asger Hamerik is barely known today even in his native Denmark. Yet in his lifetime (1843-1925) Hamerik was the leading Danish composer after Niels Gade. He studied in Germany (with Hans von Bülow) and in France with Berlioz, claiming to be the latter's only pupil and learning from him aspects of symphonic technique.

This disc of his first two symphonies (he published seven altogether) introduces us to an admirably moderate talent, but whose works deserve a hearing. The Second is more

accomplished: vigour and raw vitality are counterbalanced by unpredictable twists. The Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra, under Thomas Dausgaard delivers admirable performances of both works, and the disc can be recommended to anyone wishing to explore the byways of Danish Romanticism.

OPERA
John Higgins

VERDI
Don Carlo
Gorchakova/Borodina/
Covent Garden Orch/Hairink
Philips 454 463-2 (three CDs)
*** £44.99
PHILIPS'S *Don Carlo* is designed to square up to EMI's account of Verdi opera which came out last year. Both use the five-act version, but there similarities end. Hairink opts

for Verdi's Modena reworking in Italian and relies heavily on the new generation of Russian singers. Hairink sees *Carlo* as ultra-solemn Verdi, leaning on slow and deliberate tempi, superbly played by the Royal Opera orchestra.

Philips has a clear plus in the Eboli of Olga Borodina, full of female jealousy and sung with great warmth of tone. Dimitri Hvorostovsky's Posa is also admirable in its strength and nobility, a man with morals and aspirations above those of the Spanish court, where Philip II (a young sounding Roberto Scandiuzzi) holds uncertain sway. But Galina Gorchakova, too solid and mature an Elisabetta, and

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CHORAL
Hilary Finch

BACH
Adventskantaten
Collegium Vocale/
Herreweghe
Harmonia Mundi HMC
901605 *** £15.49
PHILIPPE Herreweghe's Collegium Vocale dance their way into Advent with irresistible, light-filled performances of three Cantatas Bach wrote for the first Sunday in the season. The earliest one, *Schwinge freudig euch empor*, scars joyfully aloft with the curlicues of a delicious solo viola d'amore.

re interwoven with the lithe tenor of Christoph Prégardien. The second work, *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* (BWV 61) starts with a sober chorale for the entry of Christ into the world and, in the sweet soprano of Sibylla Rubens, into the believer's heart. The BWV 62 *Nun komm* is the most exuberant of all.

These performances excel in capturing the gentle intimacy of the individual soul. But those who prefer their Advent pre-Reformed should turn to William Byrd's *Progress for Lady Mass* in a fine new recording from The Cardinals. Music, with Andrew Carwood, which forms the auspicious first volume of their new Byrd Edition on ASV CD GAU 170 (also ***).

* Worth hearing
** Worth considering
*** Worth buying

مكتبة الانجل

NEW MOVIES: Great!

Stallone

James Mangold

REGENERATION

ODEON

NEW MOVIES: Geoff Brown sees mumbling old Sly take on the acting heavyweights in *Cop Land* and, amazingly, win

Stallone better than De Niro? Yes

Deaf in one ear. A looming belly. Shuffling gait. Seems half asleep. This is Sylvester Stallone in *Cop Land*. He's Freddy Heflin, a lazy sheriff in a small New Jersey town on the Hudson river where there is not much for stay-at-homes to do but prop up a bar or gaze ruefully at the Manhattan skyline. "Welcome to Garrison," the roadside sign says. "Speed limit 25 mph." Stallone's own speed never tops one mph, let alone 25. Sometimes the most dramatic thing he does is blink.

A bad performance, then? Not at all. It is entirely in keeping with the character he plays, and helps to remind us that James Mangold, the writer and director, was previously responsible for *Heavy*, a small independent movie with a central character who was an overweight pizza chef so imprisoned by shyness that he could scarcely speak. Mangold likes the slow and inarticulate (see interview, opposite).

But *Cop Land* is no small independent. It was made with money from Miramax and features big names. Aside from Stallone, we get Harvey Keitel, leading light of the New York cops who have made peaceful Garrison their home; Robert De Niro as an Internal Affairs investigator; and younger stalwarts of urban crime, such as Ray Liotta and Annabella Sciorra.

Such a line-up causes problems. We have seen this lot shoot off bad words and bullets so often that the film has its work cut out establishing its own identity. Mangold's plot helps here. An off-duty cop is taunted by joyriders and accidentally kills them. His buddies stage a cover-up; the cop fakes suicide. De Niro's investigator sniffs around and enlists Stallone's help. But the sheriff, who dreamed of joining the NYPD himself, stalls: can he betray the cops he regards as his friends? Many a hero in a Hollywood Western faced the same predicament.

Mangold's variation is distinctive. He grew up in a town close to New York, full of cops and firemen, and he catches very well the feel of a tight-knit male community. And when action erupts — a car crash, a shoot-out — he delivers the goods. Yet it is hard to shake off a feeling of disappointment. De Niro's turn is unexceptional, except for his unbecoming wig and moustache. Keitel acts with greater force, although we miss the moral complexity of his work for Scorsese or Abel Ferrara. Younger players have their hands full brawling, bantering; you know the routine.

Which brings us back to Stallone. He alone ventures into new territory. There is not enough on display to suggest that a glorious career as a character actor now lies ahead, but his shuffling sheriff, trapped in a backwater with his dreams, gives *Cop Land* the human touch.

To Sumatra now, and a prisoner of war camp in the Second World War. But the prisoners in *Paradise Road* are not your usual breed. They are women — English, American, Australian, some Dutch, one German Jew — rounded up by the Japanese after the ship ferrying them from occupied Singapore is bombed. True, they suffer the expected brutalities: they fight in the



Robert De Niro, complete with laugh-a-minute wig and moustache, the newly tipped-for-Oscar Sylvester Stallone and the ever-reliable Harvey Keitel add up to millions in box-office clout for *Cop Land*

shower, and try to escape. But they also sing: not just any old piece, but adaptations of classical music, the *New World* symphony and *Bohème*, in performances that bring tears to their enemies' eyes. A writer's whim? Far from it. Bruce Beresford, the director of *Driving Miss Daisy*, wrote his script after going through documents, interviewing survivors and locating original sheet music.

The prisoners, played by Glenn Close, Pauline Collins, Jennifer Ehle and company, use the music to alleviate their hell and spite the Japanese. A few bars of Dvorák from these caged songbirds (the Malle Babbe Women's Choir from Holland is their soundtrack stand-in), and the director should have us eating out of his hand. And he does, up to a point. But Beresford perverts the music short to keep the film moving on other fronts. Since this is a POW film, the Japanese must be seen to be nasty. One prisoner is set alight, another kneels in the blazing sun surrounded by spikes. Soon the film adopts a see-saw pattern: one scene of prison brutality for every scene of music rehearsals. This gets boring.

Beresford is also kept busy letting his multinational cast strut their stuff. As the choir's instigator, Collins exudes her trademark smiles and Chris-

tian bonhomie. Close, endeavouring to be English, is unnaturally clipped. And how can Ehle keep on being so pretty despite bad food and gruelling work? Yet despite the bits of fakery, *Paradise Road* respects these courageous women, and is at its best watching tension rise and fall as friendships form across boundaries of class and nationality. If I were a teacher, I'd mark it six out of ten.

The *Borrowers*, filmed at Shepperton Studios, would score very low points for fidelity to its source, Mary Norton's children's classic of 1952. Who is this Ocular Potter character, the greedy American lawyer who prompts the eviction of the minuscule characters from their home under the floorboards? Who, for that matter, is Exterminator Jeff? And if the setting is still Britain, why does traffic drive on the right?

There is one easy answer. Any film for the mass market must be seen to be nasty. One prisoner is set alight, another kneels in the blazing sun surrounded by spikes. Soon the film adopts a see-saw pattern: one scene of prison brutality for every scene of music rehearsals. This gets boring.

Beresford is also kept busy letting his multinational cast strut their stuff. As the choir's instigator, Collins exudes her trademark smiles and Chris-

Cop Land
Warner West End
15, 105 mins
Meet Sylvester Stallone.
the overweight sheriff
Paradise Road
Odeon Haymarket
15, 121 mins
Women POWs suffer
and sing

The Borrowers
Warner West End
U, 86 mins
Forget the book,
enjoy the movie
**This World, then
the Fireworks**
Warner West End
18, 100 mins
Nasty film noir
**Marius et
Jeannette**
ABC Swiss Centre
15, 102 mins
For French
gourmands only

**It's a
Wonderful Life**
Curzon West End
U, 125 mins
Capra's epic
stands up well

relishes his cockeyed, stylised world. Battery packs, dental floss, hooks, paperclips, spoons and string: all are

inventively used as *Pod*, Homily, Arriety and Peagreen struggle to stop Potter demolishing their home. Goodman himself makes a game target, and the *Borrowers*, dressed in odd snatches of recycled material, scamper appealingly round their perilous world. Jim Broadbent heads the brood as *Pod*, although the most spirited member is the Arriety of 13-year-old newcomer Flora Newbigin.

Nothing is appealing about *This World, then the Fireworks*, unless you fancy hurting your eyes with aridly stylised images of 1950s America, and like to spend time with the callous and the twisted. Michael Oblowitz's film features Billy Zane and Gina Gershon as twin siblings in crime, haunted by witnessing their dad commit a crime of passion on their fourth birthday. Since the source material is a story by Jim Thompson, you expect the milk of human kindness to be scarce. But Oblowitz, a music video veteran, is so intent on crafting the ultimate essay in radical chic that he squeezes out human interest too. Horrible.

There are two ways for the moviegoer to recover. You can watch Robert Guédiguian's warm and bubbly *Marius et Jeannette*, although for best

results you need a taste for Mediterranean colour and to be able to care if a harassed Marseille mother finds health and happiness with a security guard at a disused cement factory. I could not quite manage this myself.

Or you can watch *It's a Wonderful Life*. Frank Capra's Christmas treat for 1946. This is much the better option. The print is new and Joseph Walker's photography impressive enough to need the glory of a cinema screen. And Capra's conception requires space. We need to bask in the bustle of this quaint town where James Stewart toils away at the family business of savings and loans. We need to be as stunned as Stewart when his guardian angel shows him his world as it might be had he never existed: a nasty cross between Las Vegas and Dodge City.

The myth has built up that Capra's film is some gooey sentimental epic. But the best parts have a fascinating dark edge, reminding us that this is a film made by people back from a war, idealism tarnished. Give yourself a treat: see it.

'Intense, brilliant ensemble piece'

Every week young film fans discuss the latest releases...

■ COP LAND
Leslie Isalah Thomas, 19: Robert De Niro delivers the same old staid performance. Melita Miletic, 19: Sylvester Stallone gives his best performance to date in this gripping thriller.

■ JETHRO
Aukin, 19: Director James Mangold has succeeded in making a first-rate cop drama — highly recommended. Amanda Boyd, 18: Harvey Keitel, De Niro, Ray Liotta and Stallone perform at their most intense in this brilliant ensemble piece.

■ PARADISE ROAD
Leslie: Glenn Close delivers yet another first-class performance. Melita: The *Borrowers* are always welcome in my home. Go see it now. Jethro: John Goodman rocks. An enchanting and funny film. Amanda: An adventure that warms the heart of your inner child. My film of the year.



Melita: Very moving. Amanda: Like a big screen version of *Tenko*. Highly watchable.

■ THE BORROWERS
Leslie: A snug 'n' lovely movie. Don't take the kids, take yourself. Melita: *The Borrowers* are always welcome in my home. Go see it now. Jethro: John Goodman rocks. An enchanting and funny film. Amanda: An adventure that warms the heart of your inner child. My film of the year.

"DEMANDS TO BE SEEN!" "MASTERLY"
INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY
"PROFOUNDLY MOVING...POWERFUL"
Geoff Andrew, TIME OUT
"Some of the best acting you will see this year"
THE SUNDAY TIMES

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NEW THIS WEEK ON VIDEO

■ CINDERELLA
Buena Vista, U, 1950
DISNEY does its new product no favours for reissuing classics from the golden age: the full-blooded animation, sense of character and attractive music in *Cinderella* make *Hercules* look puny indeed. Blandness afflicts *Cinderella* and *Prince Charming*, but Disney makes amends with the malicious cat, Lucifer, two scampering mice, and the cruel stepmother (her face always glimpsed in shadow). The film has been digitally restored for this video release.

■ THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS
Tartan, 15, 1965
ALGERIA's present turmoil is a subject crying out for cinema treatment. Until that arrives, we can rediscover Gillo Pontecorvo's masterly film, which plunges us headlong into the country's struggle for independence in the 1950s. We see, in hard-edged black-and-white, the teeming Casbah, the Liberation Front leaders planning tactics, buildings dynamited, dance-halls bombed. There is little artifice: non-actors, rapid cutting and a mobile camera ensure immediate impact.

■ IDIOT BOX
High Fliers, 18, 1997
AUSSIE loafers called Kev and Mick rattle round the suburbs drinking, arguing, mischief-making and watching TV (hence the title). Then they acquire guns and plan a bank robbery. Sounds boring? Think again, for director David Caesar makes something distinctively tart, funny and visually inventive out of the material. This movie never received the commercial exposure it deserved; maybe the video rental shops will come to its rescue.

■ CON AIR
Buena Vista, 15, 1997
A LUMBERING aircraft ferrying America's nastiest prisoners is hijacked by grinning serial killer John Malkovich, who plans to fly them to freedom. Can Nicolas Cage, a parolee en route to domestic bliss, possibly save the day? Actors, characters and dialogue are neatly matched, but humans soon get eaten up by the billowing propane fire, the hurtling debris, and the full range of rollercoaster stunts. Available to rent.

■ LOVE AND OTHER CATASTROPHES
Fox Guild, 15, 1996
THE director, Emma-Kate Croghan, was 23 when she made this film: just the right age for a happy, frisky comedy about the hothouse dramas of campus life. We spend one day with the characters. There's a room-mate to find; a course to change; a library fine to pay; a thesis to finish. Other headaches include lesbian jealousy, sudden death and a gigolo game for anything. The cast, all new faces, prance through Croghan's knowing script. A rental release.

GEOFF BROWN

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Bad tempers all over the place

It would be idle to deny the existence of just a whiff of Schadenfreude on boarding the Eurostar to Paris for the first night of *The Merry Widow* at the Palais Garnier. The Royal Opera's unevenly cast, dimly designed version had been a bit of a flop — the Paris Opéra, awash with subsidy, would surely show us how it should be done.

Wrong again: after experiencing this *Widow* and *Hansel and Gretel* at the Châtelet, this particular opera-goer came scuttling back under the Channel to a world of what seemed like operatic sanity — as far as performances are concerned, that is, as sanity elsewhere seems to be in distinctly short supply.

Admittedly the *Widow* was launched under a dark star. A dear little strike by technicians meant that Monday's first night was given with severely restricted lighting and maybe without some technical effects: the audience was given its money back, which should have put them in a good mood, initially at least.

The Garnier is dangerously big for a conversation piece — the dialogue was horribly ponderous

OPERA IN PARIS

— and the producer Jorge Lavelli emphasised this first with a vast semicircular permanent set, and then by placing the singers miles upstage at crucial moments.

Costumes were 20th-century abstract, with no sense of time, place or social context. The staging lacked both allure and zip, with an embarrassingly bad routine for the potential show-stopping Grisettes, about 50 yards away, going for nothing.

Dullest of all, however, was the fact that the first two acts were run together, with the 20 minutes of the third following an interminable interval during which I have to confess to drowning my sorrows (Gerald Kaufman might like to know that champagne is even more expensive at the Garnier than at Covent Garden).

The principals were ill-directed. Karita Mattila, looking extremely glamorous in skirts split to the navel, was not so much *The Merry Widow* as *The Decidedly Bad-Tempered Widow*, and rashly

fielded a harsh, exaggerated *chanteuse*-style chest register that signally failed to join up with the rest of her voice.

Bo Skovhus was made to play Danilo as a brash, vain slob: there was no suggestion of a relationship — past, present or future — between these two, and without that the piece is nothing. Henriette Bonde-Hansen and Michael Schade passed muster, no more, as the second couple, and there was some embarrassing under-casting in the minor roles.

Only the veteran Viennese opera star, Waldemar Kmentz, as a delightfully innocent Baron Zeta, came within spitting distance of the necessary style. Armin Jordan was the very ordinary conductor of the piece.

At least *Hansel* was marvelously conducted by Christoph von Dohnányi: he and our very own Philharmonia ensured that every strand of musical thought in this miraculous score was easily audible in the Châtelet's bright acoustics, and this without ever overwhelming the singers.

Ruth Ziesak and Randi Stene, stars of the Royal Opera's *Palestrina* earlier this year, sang most



Nothing to laugh about: Henriette Bonde-Hansen and Karita Mattila, two of the ill-directed principals in *The Merry Widow*

beautifully in the title roles, and there, alas, the good news ends. Gwyneth Jones sang the Mother, occasionally (with the greatest respect, I wish she would stop). Franz-Josef Kapellmann was a coarse Father, and Graham Clark,

none too easily cast vocally and burdened with innumerable changes of wig and costume, ran his Mime-as-Mrs-Bates act as the Witch.

Yannis Kokkos's production opened with projections of slum

housing and silhouettes of factory chimneys, but his "dark" concept, if such it was, was not seen through logically in the way that David Pountney's memorable "council estate" reading was for English National Opera. The

Dream Pantomime was simply inadequate, and the climax of the work, enshrined in those two lines of spoken dialogue, was cut. Words fail me, too.

RODNEY MILNES

Michael Ashman on the history of *Paul Bunyan*, the early, long-neglected operetta that has now been taken up by the Royal Opera

Britten's tall tale comes back to life

Fifty-six years ago an operetta written by two young expat Englishmen was premiered on a university campus in New York. It was the largest and almost the last collaboration between the rising talent of 27-year-old composer Benjamin Britten and the more established 34-year-old poet, W.H. Auden.

The sources, Auden noted drily, "were the New York Public Library." There he discovered the giant lumberjack Paul Bunyan, "one man as great as a city of ordinary men", an American folk hero of the likes of Johnny Appleseed, John Henry and Casey Jones. Bunyan (they say) started the first logging camp, staffed it with Old World pioneers (comic Swedes a speciality) and toured it around virgin America, clearing trees for the settlers to move in.

According to legend, this manly life stopped when all except foreman Helson (the Carawin), bookkeeper Johnny Inkslinger (the brains) and Babe (a huge blue ox) deserted Bunyan to find women.

Auden took the names and some attributes of the characters in the tall tales that make up the Bunyan legend. He turned the story deftly into a New World creation myth. Roles for trees, geese and a ballad-singing narrator kick off "the development of the continent from a virgin forest before the birth of Paul Bunyan to settlement and cultivation when Paul Bunyan says goodbye because he is no longer needed".

Bunyan himself is heard, but does not appear. "Theatri-



W.H. Auden and Benjamin Britten in 1941, the year *Paul Bunyan* had its world premiere in New York

cal presentation of his exploits would require the resources of Bayreuth," Auden commented. He and Britten are a little more serious at the end than the *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* feel of the original.

progress, and warns about the dangers of an easily put-on patriotism. But it's sung by a trio of a dog and two cats. Entertainment is never far away. Both men were enthusiasts for the musical, and had already collaborated on cabaret songs, film scores and plays.

At Snape Maltings tomorrow, Richard Hickox will conduct the work's first production by a major opera company. He is pleased that his cast has accepted the challenge of a piece that requires ensemble rather than star contributions. Many of them also having worked with him on the recent Vaughan Williams opera cycle, he believes "a real repertory company" has developed. The opportunities in *Paul Bunyan* have been handy for the Royal Opera at the present time. "Everyone says it has brought the company together," Hickox says. "The whole original ethos of *Bunyan* was for high-school choirs, so the chorus is essential."

"They and the orchestra have just thrown themselves into it. I can't imagine why it's not done every Christmas. It ends up with a Christmas party scene — it's a real family show. It's a gas. I'm in love with it."

Hickox's enthusiasm bubbles over: "Although it's an operetta, it also has an extremely dark side. And *Grimes* is not the wondrous achievement as a first opera that one thinks it is. This has so many pre-echoes, both of what was going on at the time, and of what he was going to write. There's Rodgers and

Hammerstein in this piece. Britten's narrator sings country and western music two years before *Oklahoma* was on Broadway. There are parodies of Gilbert and Sullivan. There's Kurt Weill."

Hickox continues: "You hear *Grimes* — the scene for the Borough — in the Act II power struggle between Hel Helson and Bunyan. There's the comedy of *Albert Herring* to come, and the stammer of Billy Budd in the farmer John Shears. I think this is Britten at his best. It was done at the same period as the Piano Concerto, and the *Hymn to St Cecilia* and *On this Island*, which are also Auden. Three masterpieces...

"There is no other opera that I know where in Act I, with a playing strength of 37, not one of the 17 numbers has the same instrumentation. You go from full orchestra to brass or wind without strings, then a jazz band, then guitar, violin, double bass. In Act II it's more of a *tutti* piece. For every character Britten has a different orchestration."

Bunyan was not an unqualified success at its essentially amateur premiere. Has misinformation about that stopped people taking up the work? "It was panned by the composer Virgil Thomson in a legendary review in *The New York Times* — although others were kinder — and *Bunyan* was reputedly discarded, or rather left in the bottom drawer, because of

Britten being so over-sensitive to criticism," Hickox says.

"Actually he and Auden decided that it was partly successful and wanted to revise it, but just never got round to doing it." (Auden, working alone, produced a new draft, with some savage cuts.)

Thirty-three years passed. Britten, recuperating after a stroke, was encouraged to take another look at *Paul Bunyan* by his friend and amanuensis, the scholar Donald Mitchell. This attempt to free Britten of writer's block ("a very astute move," Hickox says) was successful.

"He made revisions — a new Prelude and a most mysterious ending to Act I, called *Bunyan's Third Goodnight*. He excised two numbers

where some of the words were just too obscure."

Britten now wanted "some private way of hearing" the new *Bunyan*. A BBC studio recording was set up, with Peter Pears as Inkslinger — a role perhaps intended for him. "They all sat in the Red House [Britten's home in Aldeburgh] and heard it. When it came to Bunyan's Farewell, tears streamed down Britten's face and he said: 'You know, Donald, I simply hadn't remembered that it was such a strong piece'."

The Royal Opera's production of *Paul Bunyan* is at the Maltings, Snape (01728 45343) tomorrow and Saturday, and then moves on to the Shaftesbury Theatre, London, and Corn Exchange, King's Lynn.

CONCERTS: Lunging at Beethoven; Prokofiev captured in all his moods

Magical mystery

Maxim Vengerov
Festival Hall

VERY few musicians can take a classic of the repertoire and make you feel, as the piece progresses, that you haven't a clue what might happen next. It goes without saying that Maxim Vengerov is among those very few. But it would have been difficult to guess quite how many challenges he was going to set himself in the course of the first movement alone of Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata*.

That huge unaccompanied call to attention which is the opening was turned to a long, tense in-breath of anticipation. And what it presaged was a remarkably irascible *presto*. Accents snapped off both strings and piano keys as the bow bit hard even within its apparent technical facility. A glinting octave oscillation turned the ear to an elusive modulation — and then back to the fray.

As Vengerov lunged at great, reverberant pianissimo, he forced his pianist Igor Uryash to draw back the tempo, only to push ahead with renewed frenzy. Rhythmic corners were taken even

more tightly as the music developed; and Vengerov gave Uryash an even tougher time in the recapitulation.

The simplest of songs, artfully weighed and measured in its every breath, was created for the slow movement, the better to reveal its potential for variation. And here, indeed, was infinite variety, from the most introspective of studies to a beguiling half-plucked, half-sung serenade.

Vengerov and Uryash had begun their recital with Mozart's Violin Sonata in E minor. This was intimate enough to draw us in, as if to a far smaller space than the stage of the Festival Hall, and the blithe yet rapt listening quality of his playing, irresistibly recalled the young Menuhin.

The second half of the evening was there to be seriously enjoyed. Vengerov relaxed enough to luxuriate not a little in Brahms's D minor Sonata — the composer, after all, was on holiday when he began to write it.

As the evening wore on, Vengerov the entertainer stepped ever nearer the footlights. A broad grin and a coy quip or two left his audience in no doubt that his three *Hungarian Dances* by Brahms were to be taken in the spirit of encores. And then, of course, the real encores, beginning with Massenet's Meditation from *Thaïs* and ending deep into the night.

HILARY FINCH

Circus thrills

Prokofiev
Festival Hall

PROKOFIEV'S music bewitches us as children. Its familiar classical aspects, we discover privately, are twisted: its instrumentation outrageous, it is funny, shocking, happy and hideous all at once. On re-encountering the music as adults, all those childlike joys return, but with a new dimension. What was merely funny is now ironic, witty, charming; the grotesque has a deeper resonance, and what was fairylike dreaminess is now truly beguiling.

Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No 5 is just such a piece, a circus full of audacious tricks. From the moment the piano launches into its acrobatic leaps, punctuated with rude brass interjections, there is an irresistible sense of affront. The brief moderate, with its wonderfully banal dance tune, brought an audible smirk to the face, while the *largo* soon subverts its lovely melody.

But Prokofiev struggled with this work: he wanted it to be simple, but feared repeating old formulas, and so "it turned out to be complicated". His self-consciousness is ap-

parent in the suddenly modernist cadenza, and Nikolai Demidenko's loud, rhythmically energetic but somehow superficial performance only emphasised this.

He created a magical undulation with his parallel scales before the final coda, yet there were times when the piano sound lacked depth and the glittering clarity this music demands. As in the austere orchestration of the andante (from the Piano Sonata No 4) which opens the concert, there was some unconvincing playing from the London Philharmonic under Alexander Lazarev. It was clear with the performance of the Third Symphony where the focus of rehearsal had been.

After the interval came *Summer Night*, the symphonic suite from *The Belshazzar in the Monastery*. The arrival of excellent principal trumpet Paul Beniston made for an enjoyable reading of this sleek little collection.

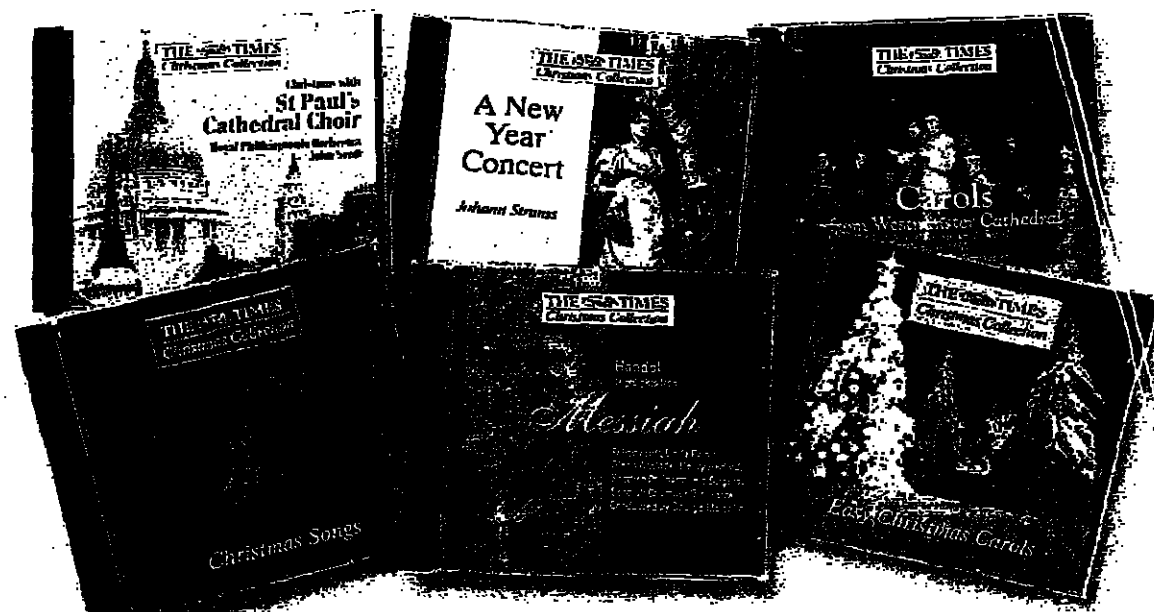
The contrast between its sub-Romantic and *Juliet* charm and the tumultuous Third Symphony could not have been greater. This symphony is a realisation of Prokofiev's opera *The Fiery Angel* is a tour-de-force of demonic energy, with a sweep and coherence that could not be less self-conscious. The LPO strings attacked its obsessive figures with savagery, and brilliantly caught the stifled atmosphere of the skittering scherzo.

HELEN WALLACE

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CHANGING TIMES

Nicholas Wapshott marks out the authorship of Groucho's funniest lines

Good thigh-slapping stuff, but who's lines were they anyway?

Politicians and other comedians are often credited with lines they have not written. The wind of change was no more written by Harold Macmillan than was "the art of the possible" by R.A. Butler or "the lady's not for turning" by Margaret Thatcher. Yet there they are in the dictionary of quotations, passing off the penmanship of others as their own.

Groucho Marx was a genuinely witty man, yet many of the quips we remember him by were written by studio gagsters. Some, like S.J. Perelman — "I've worked myself up from nothing to a state of extreme poverty" — are remembered still. Others — like the author of "Why, a four-year-old child could understand this report. Run out and find me a four-year-old child" — are not. And the parentage of his own comic writing is similarly confused. In 1927, when offered a newspaper column, Groucho realised that writing jokes is no laughing matter

GROUCHO MARX AND OTHER SHORT STORIES AND TALL TALES

Edited by Robert S. Bader

Faber, £8.99

ISBN 0 571 19432 X

LOVE, GROUCHO

Letters from Groucho Marx to His Daughter Miriam

Edited by Miriam Marx Allen

Faber, £8.99

ISBN 0 571 19440 0

and he concluded "the place for me to be funny is on the stage. There I do not have new material for every performance and my voice and mannerisms add to the comedy." Yet he went on to write seven books, a play, two screenplays and over 100 magazine pieces, some of which are collected here.

There is no doubt that Groucho could deliver a home-grown one-liner like few others. His preference was for the pun, traditionally an English vice, and, like Wilde, he enjoyed adding a twist to a cliché. "I never forget a face, but I'll make an exception in your case"; "A man is as young as the woman he feels"; "No, Groucho is not my real name. I'm breaking it in for a friend"; and the line which is so lost on the wannabes of Dean Street, "I don't want to belong to any club that will accept me as a member" are as good as any written for him. Even when writing to his daughter Miriam, he could not resist lacing the housekeeping with sardonic asides.

But when it came to extended comic writing, it seems he preferred to lean on others. Robert S. Bader, fingers Arthur Sheekman, a columnist for the *Chicago Times*, as the ghost of his journalism and essay work. Groucho thought the hack

had real comic talent and encouraged him in the screenwriting trade, but Sheekman's efforts under his own flag did not raise much of a titter. His work for Groucho, however, was well received and he agreed to remain a silent partner. When Sheekman edited *The Groucho Letters*, he removed all trace of his work on Groucho's behalf.

Groucho's persona was so well chiselled that Sheekman did not find it difficult to write in style and the results are often funny, if rarely hilarious. But the issue of muddled authorship, the ghost at this feast, lingers over the collection and stifles the impulse to laugh. All Marx Brothers fans will enjoy trying to unravel the conundrum, but if you are looking for truly uproarious writing, it would be better to pick up a collection — any collection — of Perelman.



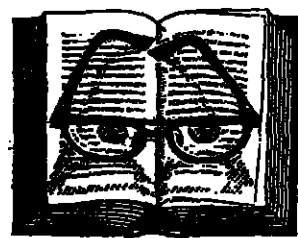
Groucho with his wife and their daughter, Miriam Marx Allen

At the feet of history

ANTHONY GRAFTON'S *The Footnote: A Curious History* masquerades as something jaunty and provocative for the general reader — like Nicholson Baker's *The Size of Thoughts*, perhaps — but is instead a work of rather dry-footed historiography, with half-page citations in foreign languages. Written in English, it was first published in German as *The Tragic History of the German Footnote* and is appearing in France as *The Tragic Origins of Erudition*, with the unwieldy subtitle "Une histoire de la note en bas de page". Faber's edition (£12.99) is bound from American sheets. So Grafton has tried to capitalise on several markets without quite deciding his subject or approach.

In a chaotic manner he describes how the mass of commentary that was crowding authors such as Virgil off their own pages by the 15th century gradually gave way to more manageable notes. The following two centuries saw the rise of critical history, which began to sift and evaluate authorities, rather than just amassing them like Casaubon in *Middlemarch*. As Jean Le Clerc heroically wrote, 1,100 double-column pages of commentary on Caesar's works was just "too long and boring".

Grafton particularly admires Gibbon for his elegant discriminations, and Ranke for his emphasis on archival authenticity. The breakthrough, Grafton argues, was the realisation that history books should contain a double story: the narrative and,



BIBLIOMANE

along the bottom, how it was researched. But how irritating for this of all books to be cropped so there is no space for the reader's own marginalia.

Grafton mentions that Rabelais and Cervantes had fun at the expense of footnotes, and writes very well about Pope's mockery of the species *pedant*, but he never considers the honourable place of notes in, say, Sir Thomas Browne or editions of Shakespeare. Ultimately, he is pretty hostile towards notes, likening them to toilets. He thinks it absurd that a legal footnote should change people's lives.

But on the contrary: notes, at best, are evidence of scrupulous care, not least about conflicting opinions. When I am tried, let it be neither by the American system of counting yellow ribbons, nor by the European system of reference to abstract ideals, but by the letter of yod old English law — even if it is set in small type. For as T.S. Eliot once remarked, in a dissenting footnote, "the spirit killed, but the letter liveth still".

CONGRATULATIONS to Bernard Quaritch on its 150th anniversary. The firm that has dominated the top of the book trade for much of that time — and is responsible for more price records than any other — is the subject of an absorbing special issue of *The Book Collector*, available from Quaritch, 5/5 Lower John Street, Golden Square, W1R 4AL; annual subscription £38 from 20 Maple Grove, London NW9 8QV.

PHILIP LARKIN was astonishingly methodical in drafting his poems, going at them daily stanza by stanza, by transcribing the best of his workbooks. A.T. Tolley's *Larkin at Work* (Hull University Press, £10.99) shows him repeatedly tiptoeing into grand metaphorical language, or explicit speculation about the futures of the couples in *The Whitsun Weddings* and the widows in *The Explosion* — which he then discards in favour of exact observation. The art was not to coerce, but again and again to achieve that wry, provincial, nights-closing-in authenticity.

A mass of Larkin material currently being offered for sale includes a letter to Charles Montagu of Faber's with a wicked parody of Ted Hughes: "The sky split apart in malice. Stars rained like pans on a shelf. Crow sat on Buckingham Palace. God pissed himself."

TWO booksellers are currently offering catalogues of books with interesting associations. *Waterfields* in Oxford have items owned by the historian Richard, Cobb. (01865 721809). Mags in Berkeley Square have the books of John and Myfanwy Piper: three catalogues priced £20 (0171 493 7160).

JIM MCCUE

Plastic fantastic?

Sarah Dunant

sizes up

suffering for beauty

The recent discovery of the tortured bodies of two cosmetic surgeons in trash bins on a Mexican railway line must have sent tremors of fear through an otherwise rich and happy profession. Fortunately, this turned out not to be the work of a gang of wannabe *Bay Watch* babes with leaking breasts, but the Jacobean-style revenge wreaked by the followers of a Colombian drug baron who had died after an operation designed to give him a new identity. It is, you might think, a story of our age.

Not according to Elizabeth Haiken's elegant history of cosmetic surgery, *Venus Envy*. Though last month's trash cans came too late for her to include in the book, she uncovers an earlier but equally tasty example in the shape of mobster John Dillinger who, in 1935, had his nose done and face lifted in an attempt to escape justice. In this case the surgeon was luckier. The FBI got to him first.

What makes *Venus Envy* such an enthralling read is that alongside a host of macabre and "no — really!" stories like that one [did you know

VENUS ENVY

By Elizabeth Haiken

Johns Hopkins University Press, £20.50

ISBN 0 8018 5763 5

that the earliest cosmetic operation took place in 16th-century Italy when a surgeon reconstructed a man's nose from bits of his upper arm after a street brawl? there is a hugely intelligent and perceptive analysis of American culture and history going on. And as cosmetic surgery grows ever more acceptable and widespread, it is worth asking how we got here, even if — having answered that question — we still can't stop.

As Haiken's book makes clear, cosmetic surgery could only have grown as fast and as colourfully as it has done in America. Because while early Americans may have connected ideals of liberty and self-improvement with inner beauty, it didn't take much for the 20th century to shift that inner outwards and let the market do the rest.

The unlikely watershed was the First World War. Not only did advances in reconstructive surgery give the profession the publicity and respectability it needed, but it also offered the rest of America an acceptable ideology other than vanity. Of course such surgery was vital. American men (and women) should have pride and self-respect in their appearance both to be integrated into society and, more importantly, to get a job. And they owed it to themselves to do whatever they could to achieve that. It was a small step for women, but a giant step for womenkind, when self-improvement got stretched to include big noses, chins and even eye bags in the doctors' waiting rooms of the 1920s and 1930s.

Depression helped, of course, both the Big One of the 1930s and the cultural kind. Haiken's research shows how the assimilation of Adler's inferiority complex into American culture proved a godsend to plastic surgeons — who could now read pathology prejudice into Jewish noses or tiny breasts, and having diagnosed the problem, could then cure it.

Add to that the growing power of Hollywood, projecting an ever more homogenised WASP version of American beauty and it is clear,



The French artist Orlan prior to the surgery she had to transform her into "the ideal woman"

in Haiken's eyes at least, that the real battle for America's body (if not also her multi-ethnic soul) was played out between the wars. And what America had bought by 1950 the rest of the world was sold from then on. (For the buttoning of Jewish and Italian noses, read the enlarging of a generation of Vietnamese bar girls' breasts and widening of thousands of Japanese and Chinese women's eyes.)

On the other hand, *Venus Envy* is not just a history of another kind of cultural imperialism. Neither is it a book about good guys and bad guys. In fact, in many cases, it's not about guys at all. Because, as any substantial analysis of cosmetic surgery has to take on board, the desire to change, improve, or hold onto one's appearance comes largely from women. Of course women are more pressured and targeted than men, and of course much of that pressure has been culturally determined by history, but the fact is that after 30 years of practical and ideological feminism we have still not found a way of successfully resisting or reinventing this. Either we admit that we are just too weak to prevail against market forces (in itself an admission of failure) or we have to be honest and accept a measure of collusion within it.

The reality is that most women buy into youth and beauty, be it creams, hairdressers, or expensive anti-wrinkle serums. And they are increasingly buying into the knife. Haiken's book shows that far from being sold down river, women have often played an active role in encouraging the culture of cosmetic surgery. In the case of breast surgery, both enlargement and

reduction, women's demands pushed the techniques as least as much as the other way round. (Which is partly why women are now finding it so hard to win suits against the silicone manufacturers: "You were vain enough to want it, so now live with it," is the underlying message behind sluggish law suits and conservative judgments.) Of course, the self-improvement they sought was in line with prevailing stereotypes, (and pushed by the huge industry of women's magazines), but women still went for them. And in this, feminism — or certainly the prevailing American model with its emphasis on equality, power and status in the market place — doesn't have a lot to be proud of.

Venus Envy searches for, and delivers, where it can, dissenting voices. The most powerful of which comes from an anonymous magazine article of 1978 where a woman laments her face-lift asking: "Was I a piece of skin arched over a facial bone structure or the woman underneath?" The implicit answer to which — given the massive increase in face-lifts over the last 20 years — is the former.

But it takes a male artist visiting an 1980s convention of cosmetic surgeons to deliver the most potent critique: "While I can admire their desire for harmonious proportions... I am taken aback by [pictures] of all these cute bland faces. Whatever happened to mortal beauty and divine beauty?"

Mortal beauty — forget it — we've come too far for that. But divine beauty? Now there's one that could make a killing in the market place. Once we've all got great cleavages and tuckered faces we'll need a new elitism to aspire to. Any ideas on how to carve that one?

A fast-selling royal title

AT WHAT point did the American sub-culture become the culture? Such novelists as Jayne Ann Phillips and Denis Johnson chronicled the underbelly of their society in the 1970s and found a large constituency, although the form predated them, by several decades. What they may have started however was a trend for writing about the dispossessed in the voices of the dispossessed. Indeed, when *Granta* magazine trawled the States recently looking for the best 20 writers under 40, they found this style alive and well, while at the same time discovered from the biographies, that the authors were Ivy League and middle class. They were writing downmarket.

Stewart O'Nan is one of *Granta*'s 20. A former aerospace engineer and Columbia University post-graduate, his fourth novel, *The Speed Queen*, is written in the voice of an Oklahoma death-row inmate, Marjorie Standford, just shy of 30, speaks into a tape recorder on the eve of her execution answering 114 questions given her, allegedly, by horror novelist Stephen King, who is going to write her story after she has passed through this world into another.

That story is set against and engendered by a popular culture of trash television, strip, drive-thrus (the Del Rancho, the Lot-A-Burger, Jimmy's Egg and Arlene's Creamy Whip J.). Even Marjorie's last meal is a take-away BBQ. When such rampant consumerism, laced with hard drugs, gets into the subconscious of people like Marjorie it makes them go

Russell Celyn Jones

THE SPEED QUEEN

By Stewart O'Nan

Viking, £9.99

ISBN 0 00 8759 X



King: an inspiration to O'Nan

insane, committing anti-social acts, including murder — all for a booty of \$27, "enough to buy us some gas and a Diet Pepsi for everybody". The novel also demonstrates the way movies influence writers' imaginations these days as much as any other form. *Speed Queen* reads like a pastiche of *Pulp Fiction*, *Natural Born Killers* and *Kalifornia*.

It's a familiar story of drug dealing that goes wrong, thereby necessitating flight down Route 66 from the heavy mob wanting their

investment returned. Such an exigency motivates attempted robbery that also goes wrong. Her accomplices are Natalie, her lover who she meets while in prison for possession, and Marjorie's husband Lamont, a mechanic in a car repair shop. She and Lamont have an infant son. Gaiety, brought along on their nightmare ride in Lamont's Oldsmobile.

It is this car that attracted her to Lamont in the first place ("Sometimes love doesn't take much. You just have to be there when it shows up"). And her understanding of cars is what attracted Lamont to her — reminiscent of Bruce Springsteen's soulful ballad, *Racing in the Street*.

O'Nan has an ear for the poetry of burger land: "flat me a skinny joe", "burn me two". He doesn't miss the emblematic irony (a drive-thru sign is "a burger with angel's wings playing a harp"), nor fails to detail his characters, like Marjorie explaining that the first thing she thinks on returning to the car after the drive-thru murders, is she's forgotten the napkins to wipe ice cream off Gaiety's face.

Twelve murders later Marjorie is caught. That she pleads her innocence is somehow irrelevant. Her voice is so compelling — warm, simple but not stupid — that by the end you're rooting for her to get out of the slammer. This is O'Nan's achievement too, to create sympathetic characters, despite their crimes and despite the fact that their lingua franca is the borrowed and exhausted semantics of the strip, the mall and the soap opera.

The jam in the city

Looking at the
genesis of some of
the world's largest
cities, Peter
Ackroyd finds
beauty in the most
chaotic landscapes

London, "the flower of cities all", is sick. So too are most other cities, creating between them "an environmental catastrophe of a magnitude never before faced by humankind". This is the theme of Richard Rogers's combative, if on occasions tendentious, volume of essays.

It should not need the example of Malthus, however, to warn against excessive lamentation; it is not always followed by revelation, and there are more catastrophe theorists than catastrophes. The fact that attention is now paid to air pollution and acid rain, rather than to sexual corruption or divine wrath, is an indication only of the fashions in pessimism.

Rogers himself believes that impending catastrophe can only be averted by "the arts of architecture and city planning", but it ought to be pointed out that London, which is of all cities incomparably the most vital and interesting, has managed without much planning for almost 2,000 years. Where the professional planners of cities have indeed intervened — particularly in the public housing of the East End — the results have usually been disastrous.

When Rogers employs phrases such as "creative citizenship", "resource productivity" and the "networking of cities", he does not necessarily inspire confidence in the validity of his own solutions. He is

CITIES FOR A SMALL PLANET
By Richard Rogers
Faber, £9.99
ISBN 0 571 17932 2

dismissive of Docklands and considers the capital to have "lost its sense of unity, direction and pride"; but since these remarks are based upon the Reith Lectures which he delivered in 1995, they only demonstrate the fact that events can outstrip theory at great speed.

But a great architect need not be a great theorist and when Rogers drops the bland platitudes of progressive thought he is interesting on specific solutions to identifiable urban problems. His presentation of urban China — and of Shanghai in particular — is a model of lucidity. His own proposals for the revival of the Thames, as the centre of the city's life, are also arresting and imaginative. He suggests that it must become "a means of contact and communication", thereby "restored to the people"; his great achievement, then, will have been to revive the past rather than create some unrecognisable future.

His notion of a "compact city" or a "dense city", rather like some medieval walled town, is equally suggestive. Certainly the city of "compactness", first created by 18th-century town planners, is now outmoded. One proviso, however, ought to be entered. It is often stated that London is essentially a collection of villages; this is not, and has never been, the case. It has always possessed a burning inner core which irradiates all that it touches.

It has also been suggested that the city itself is an organism, and the metaphor may have interesting ramifications. It might be considered as a living being, for example with its own laws of growth and development. It seems to be true that a street, or area, or even house, can actively fashion the behaviour of those who live within it. But there may be a greater and more mysterious life evolving within the stones. Does London belong to its citizens, or do Londoners belong to the city?

That it is a voracious, and destructive,



Vision of the future from the past: photograph by Adolf Fassbender of the 1939 New York World's Fair, from *After the Photo-Secession: American Pictorial Photography, 1910-55* (W. W. Norton, £32)

organism is not in doubt. The history of the capital is also the history of the dispossessed and the outcast; the city of gold is also the city of death. Rogers himself is perceptive about its character, in particular its dependence upon "profit alone" and its "lacklustre attitude towards planning". But that has always been the case, and at this late date it is unlikely that its history can be reversed.

It may well be, as Rogers suggests, that cities "exist first and foremost to satisfy the human and social needs of communities", but this represents a 20th-century perspective. London was built upon the imperatives of power and money. Washington was designed by a few Masonic idealists. Rome was reconstructed as the centre of imperial spectacle; rarely, if ever, were the needs of "communities" at the heart of the urban enterprise.

Even if Rogers is right to emphasise the fact that cities can become the harbour of a common life, such matters cannot be planned in advance. It ought to be remembered that Thomas More's *Utopia* was conceived as an elaborate practical joke and all idealised cities, from Brasilia to Canberra, seem spiritless. It is not possible to create a community by diktat and when Rogers suggests that London requires an "overall strategic plan", the designs would probably end up in a museum with those of Christopher Wren and John Evelyn.

Perhaps urban centres should be de-

signed to "involve" their citizens in the creation of a genuinely open environment. But it is still unclear whether even the best of contemporary architecture does reflect a true communal ideal, as in the Gothic enterprise imagined by Ruskin, or whether it represents the vision of a group of planners imposed upon an uncaring and uninformed populace.

Rogers would try to encourage real participation by employing the resources of electronic information. He is also eager to harness the latest technology as a way of designing cities which will themselves encourage the "networking of creativity". Many people, however, will here part company with him. The idea that the "information network" is somehow expanding our "brain power" is open to argument, since one of the delusions of the modern imagination lies in the belief that information is valuable for its own sake. The Internet is perhaps the most degrading and futile development of contemporary technology: the idea that a city might be developed in its image is, frankly, horrifying. We will really then enter a new dark age, covered with webs and concealed by nets.

Cities are more mysterious, and their laws of development more obscure, than any abstract or idealised version of the future. As this reviewer has had cause to mention before, Rogers's own Lloyd's Building has been erected on the site of London's greatest medieval maypole. The symmetry there may not, perhaps, be susceptible to computer analysis.

Raymond Seitz on Jefferson's French adventure

From backwoods to boulevards

THE PARIS YEARS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON
By William Howard Adams
Yale, £21
ISBN 0 300 06903 0

This is a weekend-in-the-country book, a kind of getting-to-know-you, smuggling-in digest whose sparkling scholarship is disguised by its ambling pace. William Howard Adams writes about the Paris years of Thomas Jefferson, who went to France as American minister in 1784 to represent the fragile interests of the fledgling republic and who remained there until the autumn of 1789.

Jefferson was a self-taught polymath, and Adams divides his book into delectable chapters which cover the variety of the great man's mental encyclopaedia, from architecture and politics to horticulture and astronomy. As much as anyone, and certainly more than any American, Jefferson embodied the European Enlightenment. For such a man to have been suddenly transported from the backwoods of Virginia to the boulevards of Paris must have been, for him, an intellectual fulfilment of near giddy proportions.

Convinced of the beauty and power of reason, Jefferson believed the American Revolution was the apotheosis of the Enlightenment and that imminent change in France was bound to be a validation of American ideals. His optimism was shared by some of the leading lights of French society — Lafayette, La Rochefoucauld, Condorcet — who often gathered around his table at the Hotel de Langeac to construct a rational framework for a new age.

The mounting turmoil outside Jefferson's residence suggested a different fate for the decrepit Bourbon regime, but, as the author comments, the American minister put "the best gloss on a deteriorating



Polymath: Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

situation" and failed to anticipate the wild excesses which would consume the French Revolution. The storming of the Bastille he dismissed as a little local difficulty. As a diplomat Jefferson should have had his pay docked for allowing his preconceptions to cloud the gritty realities.

Politics, however, was only one part of Jefferson's experimental thinking in the philosophical laboratory of late-18th-century Paris. The "appetite of his eye" also took in the aesthetic revolution of Neo-Classicism. He frequently visited the studios of Jean-Jacques David and Jean-Antoine Houdon and embraced the heroic idealism of these artists. He travelled to Nîmes where he gazed "like a lover on his mistress" at the harmoni-

ous proportions of the Maison Carrée, which he insisted form the model for the Virginia Assembly in Richmond. His images of America's new republican capital in Washington were inspired by the grand Palladian architecture of Gabriel and Le Doux, and the gardens of his mind filled up with the designs of André Le Notre. Jefferson wrote: "The greatest service that can be rendered any country is, to add a useful plant to its culture".

Adams takes us through all these compartments of Jefferson's intellect and tries to bring together a complete picture of the man. Living in an abstract world, Jefferson was a "tremendous possibility" with a disciplined character unrelieved by humour or irony. He relied on "the system of things" — order, balance, logic — so that he could, in Jefferson's words, "combat the chaos of experience".

But that combat was hard. Jefferson was a bundle of contradictions, most obviously as a passionate proponent of freedom who kept 204 slaves on his Monticello estate. He was enchanted by the sophisticated women of Paris while at the same time advocating the dutiful domestic role of a wife. And there were deeper inner conflicts as well: between reason and revolution, Europe and America, experience and innocence, agrarianism and urbanism, wealth and decadence — all of which converged during his Paris years. "This intellectual tension," concludes Adams, "is part of Jefferson's attraction and distinguishes him from any other American leader." As an introduction to America's most complex public figure, Adams has presented a superbly colourful portrait.

Down and dirty realism

The world of Mary Gaitskill's stories smells strangely, tantalisingly of damp rooms, spit, booze, old perfume and stale sex, and its soundtrack riffs are not for dancing. Again and again Edward Hopper painted the lonely blues and ochres of its streets and bars, where talk is frozen as it rises to the ceiling, and there is nothing behind the eyes but pain. Raymond Carver would feel at home in this slow, sad, yet endlessly sparky universe, and so would Jayne Anne Phillips — but Mary Gaitskill's realism is, if anything, even "dirtier" than theirs.

She renders sadness at ugliness a sentimental irrelevancy, an indulgence. There is nothing else for it but to break off the bottle top with your teeth, and get under the blanket with whoever is at hand — and who will (you hope) prove not to be too cruel. Because it's cold out

there, especially when the lights go out — and the breaks are few.

All the same, the triumph of this collection is in its acute honesty about human failure: its perception of the little, shop-soiled dreams that flop in the corners yet still breathe

life. In the first story, *Tiny, Smiling, Daddy*, a father's inadequacy unfolds so gradually that the final remembered proof of it shocks like a slap in the face. In *Comfort* a man is caught between his grief for a sick mother and his disappointment that his girlfriend cannot respond in the way he thinks she should. In the linked set of four stories, *The Wrong Thing*, a bisexual woman drifts through offbeat, unsatisfactory sexual relationships, ap-

parently cultivating meaningfulness — until the first epiphany: "I was in a garden with my friends. I could not fully see what lay about me, but still, I knew it was there, abundant, breathing and calm."

Gaitskill's prose is extraordinary, illuminating the most ordinary moments with a laser beam. So, at a party, "a woman's bright dress flashed with efficient strides". The bisexual narrator in *Stuff* glances at her girlfriend and notices: "The darkness was like an animal about to lick her with its rough tongue." A man on a plane notices that the woman next to him "seemed in need of comfort and care, like a stray animal that gets fed by various kindly people but never

held". Another story ends with the vivid realisation of estrangement: "Her face, half turned away from him, was strained, diminished and searching for something that he didn't know, something that had nothing to do with him, nothing at all."

There is something exhilarating about such observations, redemptive as they are by pity, even love. The stories repay many readings for the complexity of style as well as emotion. Gaitskill quotes Carson McCullers as her epigraph, and I am reminded that McCullers also embraced the writer's requirement "to know human things, even if they aren't wholesome", and quoted with approval the Latin dictum: "Nothing human is alien to me." Gaitskill's achievement is to illuminate the small inadequacies of humankind, and then to compel forgiveness, because there is nothing else to do.

Bel Mooney

BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO
By Mary Gaitskill
Penguin, £15.99
ISBN 0 330 35146 6

The cans and can'ts of processed peace

Paul Bew

MAN OF WAR: MAN OF PEACE?
The Unauthorised Biography of Gerry Adams
By David Sharrock and Mark Devenport
Macmillan, £16.99
ISBN 0 333 08833 5

THE position of the IRA used to be unambiguous: violence would continue until Britain declared an intent to withdraw from Northern Ireland. "I hope the day will come again when British representatives will realise that the only way to a permanent peace in Ireland is to meet representatives of the republican movement and negotiate with them a phased and orderly withdrawal," declared the IRA chief, Sean MacStiofain, in a 1970s interview recycled into a 1990s IRA propaganda video which — the authors point out — also contains contributions from Gerry Adams.

Yet nothing can hide that Gerry Adams has abandoned MacStiofain's agenda. So multiple have been his re-volutions, from Ballymurphy to the White House and Downing

Street, Gerry Adams is now the very model of the Post-Modern Irish republican.

Adams hails with joy discursive shifts — at the current round of multiparty "talks" the British Government is for the first time formally neutral on the union — while IRA traditionalists insist that the principle of consent (and even the framework document — as its co-author Michael Ancram

points out here) imply the continuation of the reality of partition. In June 1972, according to the authors, "a bewildered Gerry Adams walked out of Long Kesh and into the arms of Dolours and Marion Price, two young republican sisters", recently the Price sisters graced the conference of republican Sinn Féin, led by Adams's bitter critic, Ruairi O Bradaigh.

Even an ally like Francis Molloy has felt it necessary to assuage grassroots IRA anger in South Armagh by holding out the prospect of Irish unity within this generation, even though — as this work reminds us — the Irish patron of the peace process, former Prime Minister Albert Reynolds, has ruled this out. It is the merit of this non-reverential, serious and original biography — which eschews any glorification — that it is the best account so far of how Adams got to this point.

Gerry Adams initiated the peace process in 1992-94 with three publicly stated objectives: he would accept Dublin and London joint authority over Northern Ireland as a transitional stage to Irish unity; he wanted Britain to become a long-term persuader



Foot in the door? Gerry Adams in Downing Street, 1992

for Irish unity; and the IRA would not hand over arms before a settlement acceptable to it was reached. The British Government initially resisted Adams on all three counts but gave way in the end on the arms issue; nevertheless, it has refused to endorse joint authority or the persuader concept and Adams has come

round to support for the framework document, leaving him, as Devenport and Sharrock correctly point out, "dangerously open to the assertion that he was settling for reforms of a partitionist state rather than seeking its overthrow".

Why has Adams stuck with the "peace process"? *Man of War: Man of Peace?* suggests three answers — political realism; pleasure in his own greatly enhanced personality cult; and, more attractively, a personality that is slightly less sectarian and anti-Protestant than that of the majority of senior republicans: an admittedly rather distinctive reference group. A reported remark — which like so many things he has always denied — "I am prepared to wade up to my knees in Protestant blood to get to a united Ireland" — is balanced in this book by other less depressing testimony.

Mark Devenport and David Sharrock, both originally Cambridge-trained historians, are representative of a recently emergent, more reflective, bristly pack of reporters on the Irish scene. They correctly start with the pro-Nazi phase of Belfast republicanism in the 1940s: it was the cadres formed in this epoch who launched the Provisionals and they and their families — Adams is only the most celebrated example — remain at the heart of things. Indeed, this book so frequently subverts the version of key events in Adams's autobiography *Before the Dawn* that it is little wonder that Adams's spin-doctor, Richard McAuley, did not want it to be written and Adams himself regarded it as an impertinence.

Paul Bew is Professor of Politics at Queen's University, Belfast.

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RUGBY UNION

Scotland put their faith in five changes

BY MARK SOUSTER AND KEVIN FERRIE

INJURIES and, in one case, selectorial whim, ensure that a radically-altered Scotland side from that which capitulated to Australia will face South Africa at Murrayfield on Saturday. Five changes have been made, there is a new captain in Rob Wainwright, who is fit after injury, while Kenny Logan, who is dropped, is the highest profile casualty.

Wainwright's return will be welcomed. He takes over the captaincy from Andy Nicol. Logan, the Wasps wing, appears to have been made the scapegoat for the manner of Scotland's defeat 12 days ago, although he was by no means the worst offender.

Drastic surgery to a front five that faces the prospect of an even sterner examination by South Africa than it did against the Wallabies would have been more appropriate.

Logan, the holder of 31 caps, is dropped for the second time

the Border Reivers in Europe. Craig Joiner replaces the injured James Craig, while, as expected, Rowen Shepherd is recalled at full back in place of Duncan Hodge, who like Logan, is on the replacements' bench.

But for Craig's injury, Logan is unlikely to have figured in the 21 at all. The fact that he went to New York on holiday last week because Wasps did not have a league match could also have been a factor in Logan's omission.

Explaining the player's exclusion, Richie Dixon, the Scotland coach, said: "Having looked at the tape of the game, we felt that his contribution both in attack and defence was not what we would have expected from him."

Joiner, 25, won the last of his 17 caps in the first international against New Zealand in June last year. He was dropped for the second international in Auckland and since then has struggled to overcome groin and thigh injuries that have interrupted his career at Welford Road.

"Being out has been quite hard for me to deal with," he said. "I did not want to be remembered as one of those guys who won all his caps on his way up," he said.

Although there must be a question mark over Wainwright's match fitness after playing only one club game in a month, his qualities of leadership and his experience are commodities Scotland will certainly need.

At the press conference yesterday, Wainwright, who has overcome an Achilles injury, reiterated that the team must put the Australia game behind them.

"We have been through the post mortem, now we are concentrating on another game," he said. "We know that South Africa are a very strong side and they are definitely on the way up after their defeat at the hands of the Lions in the summer. We know it is a tall order but, if we get the performance we are looking for, the result we want might come."

Craig Chalmers is picked at inside centre because of Alan Tait's absence and links again with Tony Stanger, in a mid-field combination that served



Wainwright, left, the Scotland captain, and Walton get down to some serious work in training yesterday

Brittle move causes fresh unrest

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE Rugby Football Union (RFU) Council, which meets in London tomorrow, will find itself reluctantly revisiting old hostilities when it debates the replacement of John Jeavons-Fellows as one of England's two representatives on the International Rugby Football Board (IRFB). Council members may find it strange, too, that this is an issue over which Cliff Brittle, the management board chairman, has threatened resignation.

In a move that threatens to destabilise once more English rugby's fragile political peace, Brittle suggested at a recent management board meeting that he, Fran Cotton (the board vice-chairman) and Graham Cattermole (chairman of the finance committee) would resign if Jeavons-Fellows did not stand down.

While there are strong differences of opinion between Brittle and Jeavons-Fellows, who were the competing candidates for the post of chair-

man in January 1996, there seems no reason why such a sledgehammer is necessary, particularly at this time.

Brittle's position was confirmed at the annual meeting of the RFU in July and since then a new administration, amateur and professional, has been taking stock at Twickenham and moving to redress the destructive effect of the previous 18 months.

If Brittle has no confidence in Jeavons-Fellows, who sits on the finance, tours, policy and game regulations committees of the IRFB, it must be assumed that he believes the RFU has not been represented properly on the international body. But it can also be construed that he seeks the overthrow of a political opponent, which is bound to create a wave of uncertainty within the game.

The RFU lost two long-serving individuals, Tony Hallett and Colin Herdridge,

have found his attitude arrogant, which is how Cotton characterised him at the board meeting last month.

Jeavons-Fellows was a proponent of the controversial television deal with BSkyB, which Brittle has consistently opposed, but his appointment as IRFB representative this season, along with Malcolm Phillips, was officially endorsed.

Peter Brook, the RFU president, was not prepared to comment on the affair, like the other principals involved, but he did say: "I am working for unity within the game and always will be." That unity may be sorely tested tomorrow.

Andrew Kerr, the Scotland seven's coach, believes that his team's chances in the Dubai international tournament have been hit by insufficient preparation. Scotland had only three training sessions before flying out to the Gulf state. Kerr said: "It is simply not enough."

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No easy pickings as time arrives for guessing to start

Marseilles gave us Cantona, and gave France the continental glory of Bernard Tapie, whose money bought the European Cup. So what now awaits England, Scotland and 30 others at the World Cup draw tonight in this intriguing Mediterranean port?

The playing field is level. People can look for sinister arrangements, for so-called groups of death, or for easy pickings... but they cannot really second-guess what will come out of what is transparently the most equitable system that FIFA has devised.

Just as the seedings, whether England approved or not, were perfectly proper, so the new format of separating countries by geography rather than arbitrary second, third and fourth seedings, makes the main draw equally so. It may have the trappings of absurd theatre, it may resemble the glibly wrapping around a short message inside a Christmas cracker, but

tonight has all the makings of a decent lottery.

Swilling around the harbour is intrigue, phobia, fantasy. Yet what is the point of speculating on "best-case scenarios"? England are about to realise their fate, and it is a shallow observer who would deem, for example, Romania, Jamaica and Iran as easy prey.

The Romanians are rightly seeded - they were competitive through to the last eight in 1994, they were rampant in qualifying, and while their stars may be long in the tooth, the first round is precisely when you would not want to catch them. The same remark applies to Iran, who are not technically in the same class, not experienced, but are likely to be running on almost religious fervour in the early matches.

The seedings announced on Tuesday upset England because some felt that, having beaten Italy to qualify, the Italians had no right to be favoured. How so? Italy were

the unbeaten runners-up in the last World Cup. They won at Wembley and only drew against England in Rome, and they then qualified via the predetermined back door of play-offs.

As for the main competition, it is true that the World Cup has expanded, yet that affords each team a 50-50 chance of reaching the second round. Moreover, the expansion fulfils the promise that Josip Havelange, the FIFA president, made when he was voted into power almost 25 years ago on the generosity of African voting. He said then that he would do all in his power to raise that continent to world standards, that he would send them coaches, finance, and eventually places at the top table of international football.

They are here, and Nigeria, in particular, has the force, the ability, the courage that belies African disorganisation... attributes that no one in their right mind will be happy to be drawn

ROB HUGHES



applauds FIFA's level playing-field

against. They could, the Olympic champions, be World Cup semi-finalists, if only they can hire a manager and arrange some preparatory games.

Certainly, teams from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, could rouse themselves to take advantage of any first-round opponent who was complacent. Better than the old shameful, contrived goalless draw with which Australia and Germany each qualified through the opening round of 1982 in Spain.

Better, surely, that there are memories of the way Cameroon so cheekily, so athletically and so meritoriously outwitted Argentina in the first match of 1990. Here was a side of innocence, making the best of their day, and in the end it was harmless fun because Argentina reached the final of that World Cup, losing to Germany. So, form really is temporary, and class is permanent.

This evening, as the names tumble out, it must be remembered that football is increasingly a lingua franca. Everyone is entitled to hope, everyone should believe in the efficacy of this draw,

and everyone will have time to prepare for their known opponents next summer.

Speaking of opponents, there has been rapid response to the disclosure in *The Times* yesterday that Pelé would attend the pre-draw match between Europe and the Rest of the World, but not be at the ceremony itself. It could hardly be expected that the Queen would react so swiftly as to award him an honorary knighthood yesterday morning, but the disclaimer from Sepp Blatter, the FIFA general secretary, that there was cause to regret FIFA's attitude towards "Sir Pelé", was far for the course.

Pelé, insisted FIFA, would be in the VIP tribune at Stade Velodrome for the football, and there was nothing to read into his absence from the draw.

Pelé himself reiterated that he would be at the football, and would watch the draw on television. "It is not a problem for me not to be at the draw," he said. "If

the president [Havelange] embrace me, I would away. I respect him, done many things for was 16." So all was harbour front.

Not quite. Lennart, the head of the organising committee, declared runner in Havelange as FIFA president, said: "Pelé is greatest personalities: ory of football, and star, but is still, around, an idol for millions, never happen again, excluded from such a football event."

Last night, FIFA denied had been barred from, "He is invited as Minister for Brazil and will be enclosure," Blatter said. Did I say there were trigrams? Not in the draw

Pelé's knighthood

Imbalance engenders concern

Women coaches in urgent need of kick-start

Among the great mysteries of sport, there is none stranger than the case of the missing woman coach. How is it that when more girls and women than ever are taking part in a wider range of sports than ever, the woman coach is still the rarest of sporting oddities?

It is not that they cannot do it. There are no better coaches, male or female, than Penny Chuter in rowing or Sue Slocombe in hockey. It is not that they do not want to do it. This week, Vanessa Hardwick, 32, has come out of a bitterly fought legal battle with the Football Association with £5,000 in her back pocket.

She won a sex discrimination claim after failing a coaching course at Lilleshall. Hardwick was there, alongside the former Liverpool player, Sammy Lee, and sometime Tottenham Hotspur player, Paul Allen, and actually gained better grades on the advanced section than both of those former professionals. Yet they passed and she failed.

In fact, only two women have ever passed the course, while some 1,500 men have collected the certificate - including the former England coaches, Terry Venables and Bobby Robson.

Hardwick, who coaches and plays for Burnham Ladies, says she will be back on the course next year and hopes to get a job coaching women players in the United States.

Women's football is reckoned to be the fastest growing sport in Britain, but Hardwick despairs at the dearth of top-class women coaches. She believes that coaches, both male and female, suffer from a lack of respect in Britain and fears that we will fall far behind Italy, Norway and the United States unless we train more women coaches.

There has been a long history of hostility to women in sport. They have smashed their way through barrier after barrier, but they have still failed to capture their share of prizes in coaching, management and administration.

The problem goes back a long way. The founder of the modern Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, was always opposed to women in sport. It was, he said, "against the laws of nature". He once described women's toboggan-



ing as "the most inaeesthetic sight human eyes could contemplate". Forty years after the start of the modern Olympics, de Coubertin was still against them taking part unless it was to "crown the victors with laurels".

Others at the top shared his views. In 1936, Avery Brundage, later to become president of the International Olympic Committee (a post that he held until 1972), said: "I am fed up to the ears with women as track and field competitors... their charms sink to something less than zero."

It was not surprising that coaching came to be dominated by men and many of them shared the view of Percy Cerutty, the training guru who inspired Herb Elliot, Australia's greatest miler. "Any sport for women," Cerutty said, "should have been kept to the Victorian era when nobody took it seriously. Their efforts are ridiculous and sometimes lowering when compared with the performances of men."

In defiance of such views, women continued to force their way into sport, but the statistics that tell of their increasing participation also reveal a sorry imbalance when it comes to coaching. At the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, for instance, 66 per cent of the



Hardwick legal battle

competitors were male and 34 per cent female, yet 92 per cent of the coaches were men.

Sue Campbell, the former director of the National Coaching Foundation who now runs the Youth Sports Trust, said: "There are plenty of women coaching at grassroots level, but there is a definite lack at mid and high levels of coaching. To be fair, soccer and rugby are trying to do something about it, but it won't happen overnight."

"Women get involved, but they don't often go up the coaching ladder. It's not just male prejudice, it's more often family commitments."

"It won't end unless we are proactive. At leisure centres you will find creches for women who want to do aerobics or dancing. We need the same sort of support for women who want to go into coaching and administration. "Women have broken through in commerce and industry," she said, "but in sport, where the old blazer brigade still rule, they hit the glass ceiling."

He said: "One of the worst things is that we have no fast-track system to turn our top sports women, and men, into great coaches. Instead, we let them slip through our fingers. It is crazy to lose someone like Sally Gunnell. We should be able to take athletes like her, in the sunset of their careers, and bring them in to coaching."

"It is what used to happen in the old Soviet Union. There you would go straight from being the world record-holder to coaching the next world record-holder."

In Ireland, they do things differently. Dublin boasts a monocycling nun, Sister Liz Smyth, who is also a qualified boxing coach. And she is not alone.

"Half the population of the country are women," Brendan O'Conaire, the director of coaching of the Irish Amateur Boxing Association, said. "All mothers are women and, very often, it is the mothers who have the greatest influence on youngsters when it comes to choosing a sport. It would be ludicrous to exclude women."

Ludicrous indeed, but in this country we still have a long way to go before sport catches up with the coaching nun on her motorbike.

JOHN BRYANT



Colin Montgomerie plays from beneath the trees on the 1st hole at the Gary Player Country Club yesterday during the Pro-Am before the Million Dollar Challenge, which begins today in Sun City, South Africa.

Montgomerie won the event last December in a play-off against Ernie Els, who is the favourite this year. Nick Faldo and Ian Woosnam are the other Britons in the 12-strong field.

Photograph: Allsport

SWIMMING

Russia on brink of total ban

A RECENT spate of positive drug tests could exclude several leading swimmers from the world championships in Perth, Australia, next month, while Russia is on the brink of becoming the first nation to be suspended en masse from international competition.

Fina, the international governing body, would make no comment yesterday on reports that three Russians, two of them European champions, the European 50 metres freestyle champion and record-holder, Olga Kochetkova, a European silver medal-winner, have been excluded from their national team after testing positive for an anabolic steroid.

However, a Fina source told *The Times* that officials were investigating "several other positive tests from other countries apart from the Russian three and one swimmer who faces a four-year suspension for three no-shows in out-of-competition testing". One of

the positive tests is said to have been provided by "one of the very biggest names in the sport". The positive tests are said to have been provided by swimmers from "a mixed bag of countries".

The Russian federation confirmed yesterday that it had excluded from the national team Natalia Mesheryakova, the European 50 metres freestyle champion and record-holder, Olga Kochetkova, a European silver medal-winner in the 4 x 100 metres medley relay, and Vladimir Pyshenko, a European gold medal-winner in the 4 x 200 metres freestyle relay.

All three are coached by Andrei Zelenyev and are said to have tested positive for an anabolic steroid. Gennadi Touretski, coach to Alexander Popov, of Russia, the Olympic and world champion in the 50 and 100 metres freestyle, said that the news from Russia was "grim". "If one more Russian produced a positive test, could Alex swim for the United Nations?" he asked.

Cornel Marculescu, director of Fina, said yesterday: "We have no comment to make at this time. We will try to solve these matters prior to Perth."

"regardless of a Fina hearing". The matter will, nonetheless, go before Fina's doping panel. Significantly, the samples were taken by out-of-competition testers at a training camp in October. They would, therefore, have been Fina tests. If four swimmers from one nation test positive within a 12-month period, Fina can suspend the whole nation from international competition for up to four years.

In Australia, Gennadi Touretski, coach to Alexander Popov, of Russia, the Olympic and world champion in the 50 and 100 metres freestyle, said that the news from Russia was "grim". "If one more Russian produced a positive test, could Alex swim for the United Nations?" he asked.

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RUGBY LEAGUE

Workington win fight for league survival

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

THE consortium behind the takeover of Workington Town has persuaded the Rugby Football League (RFL) not to expel the Cumbrian club. A meeting of the Rugby League Council yesterday voted to keep the club within the league structure and also indicated that the financially-ailing Keighley Cougars could take part in an anticipated 19-team competition below the Super League next year.

Before the meeting at Salford, the administrator at Keighley took out a temporary injunction, which prevented the Council from making any direct decision about the club's future and the suspension of its annual allocation from the £4.7 million allotted to first division clubs from the central Super League pot.

Without the funds and a benefactor, such as the one Workington have found, Keighley, whose debts exceed £1 million, will find it difficult to compete next season. Nonetheless, when the First and Second Division Clubs Association meets today to consider the precise structure of a merged division below the Super League, Keighley will be included.

The one club definitely out next season is Prescott Panthers, forced into administration having struggled along in eight different guises since 1922. The club actually applied to have its membership of the RFL withdrawn without a vote by delegates from the 31 member clubs.

Sir Rodney Walker, the RFL chairman, said "a line was being drawn under those clubs who go into administration or enter a creditors' voluntary arrangement". In future, they could expect their Super League handouts to be suspended. Given the parlous state of clubs revealed by the accounts KPMG this week, there will be several nervous finance directors.

A consortium led by Bill Dobie, a former national rally champion, who took over the ailing Workington club this week persuaded the RFL board of directors to lift its exclusion threat and release its Super League funds. "I understand there were some abstentions in the council meeting, but nobody voted against us," Dobie said.

The reborn Oldham club, after the liquidation of Oldham Bears, made its first signings - John Hough, the Warrington Wolves hooker, and Darren Robinson, a half back on the Bears' register last season.

BOXING

Maloney defend campaign from h

By SRIKUMAR S. BOXING CORRESPONDENT

OVER the past four weeks poster advertising Heham's bout with Pazienza at Wembley on Saturday has been some concern and emt, ment for boxing's lum, Those not in tune w poster's style recoiled yesterday when Frank oney staged a press con, to publicise the contest.

The poster, under the ing "The Taming Of Devil", depicts Pazienza named the Pazmaniar after the fierce Tasmamarsupial) as a crazed i, of hell, holding the se, heads of two women, w: saintly Graham, naked ex for his belt and gloves, lo on.

If Maloney had not been, promoter but an artist, il picture might have had son surrealistic appeal, but as boxing poster, it was puerile and offensive.

Maloney explained that he has arrived at his strategy after seeing Evander Holyfield using religion to sell his bout with Michael Moorer. "I saw religion doesn't go with violence, but sex and violence do," he said. The press conference was another crude exercise in presentation involving scantily clad women and pantomime gimmicks.

Even boxing die-hards squirmed in embarrassment as Pazienza, of the United States, entered with a man dressed as the devil, and Graham, in a circus showman's outfit, came in with a priest to the accompaniment of Gregorian chants. The boxer had little to say except to exchange a few blue jokes and the usual fight clichés.

It was a pity that the contest was promoted in such an infantile manner. The match is an excellent one and needs little hype, but Maloney defended his production, saying: "What have I done? I am a promoter and my job is to promote. It's good, clean fun. Anyone who doesn't like this is not living in the real world. They have a problem, not me."

Frank Warren, who announced that Joe Calzaghe, the World Boxing Organisation super-middleweight champion, would be defending his title on January 24 in Cardiff, was right when he said: "When you link sex to boxing and call it sex and violence, I think you've lost the plot somewhere along the line. It makes it very difficult to get blue-chip sponsorship for boxers when the sport is given an image like that."

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 46

HEIMWEH

(b) Home-sickness. The German word, equivalent to the Greek nostalgia. "The Swiss are remarkable to have a Distemper, which they call the Heimweh, a desire of going home, and wherever they are in Service they get leave to return to their Canton at least once in Some Years, and certainly desire to Dye there."

KISSAR

(9) The ancient African lyre. An adaptation of the colloquial Arabic Kitar. "Kissar (Greek kithara), bow lyre of East Africa, a survival of the ancient Greek lyra, still found in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda. The body is black, of wood, covered with a sheepskin membrane laced to the back of the body."

MURAJI

(a) In early imperial Japan, one of the hereditary titles for a family or clan who claimed their descent from other gods than the divine ancestors of the emperor. The Japanese word for "great". "It became a custom to describe the more important members of a clan or corporation by the name of their hereditary office or by some honorific title granted by the court. Thus we have muraji, which means leader of a group."

KLEYWANG

(a) A single-edged Indonesian sword. An adaptation of the Malay klaywang.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1... Rd3? is decisive as if 2 Rh7? 3... Kd2? 4 Kd1 Rd1 is checkmate. If 2... (to stop the mating threat) 2... Rh3 3 Bb1 Rc3 and Black will win easily.

TENNIS: BORG AND McENROE TO MEET IN NOSTALGIC ALBERT HALL REMATCH

Legends providing senior service

By JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT

THE Albert Hall makes an appropriate venue for the game's legends competing in the Honda Challenge Senior Tour of Champions, which gets under way today. John McEnroe and Bjorn Borg lead a cast that should enthral spectators at London's principal bastion of nostalgia.

Also making light-hearted appearances are Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman, who are both engaged in the doubles. Rusedski, allied with Peter McNamara, a multiple winner of the Wimbledon doubles title, today opposes Henman, partnered by John Lloyd, the former Great Britain No 1. The two Britons have raised the tournament's profile, but the main attraction is the presence of two veterans

who collectively captured eight Wimbledon singles championships in nine years.

McEnroe, 38, and Borg, 41, are to renew a famous rivalry. Their showdown tomorrow marks the first time that they have met in Britain since McEnroe ended Borg's streak of five successive Wimbledon titles in 1981. For the thirtysomethings and beyond, the meeting of these two giants will revive memories of a golden era in the sport.

McEnroe and Borg are in the same round-robin group, which is completed by Guillermo Vilas and Lloyd. The second group comprises McNamara, Henri Leconte, Johan Kriek and Mansoor

Bahrami. The last-named, of Iranian extraction but now based in Paris, is reputedly the finest trick-shot exponent the game has seen.

The tour has recently evolved into a worldwide travelling circus for the game's former stars. Borg, Leconte, Vilas, Kriek and Bahrami all played a similar event in Germany last week, when Borg - as British audiences came to expect during his record Wimbledon reign - emerged triumphant. After winning each of his three round-robin matches, the Swede brushed aside Kriek in the final to record his sixth tour title.

McEnroe, for his part,

arrives in London after recovering from a foot injury that has kept him off the court for nine weeks. He has been active on the tour for two years, although his services as a plain-speaking television commentator are in great demand. McEnroe has mellowed since his on-court histrionics and brilliant natural talent combined to make him one of the biggest draws in sport.

The tournament's format requires each player to contest three round-robin matches in as many days. The winner of each group progresses to the final on Sunday. Matches are decided over two complete sets, with a sudden-death tie-break deciding matches locked at one set apiece.

Newcombe rules cup changes out of court

JOHN NEWCOMBE, the Australia Davis Cup captain, said yesterday that he opposed most options being considered by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) for streamlining the competition.

The ITF is concerned that the Davis Cup is becoming unwieldy and that the length of matches is not helping television coverage.

Brian Tobin, the ITF president, said that modifications being considered included shortening matches to the best-of-three sets instead of five, making provision for tie-breaks in every set, including the last, and even using one service instead of two. The competition has increased each year to the point where 131 nations will compete for the Davis Cup in 1998.

Tobin said that one idea was to have a world group with 14 countries instead of 16, with the champions and runners-up getting a first-round bye as reward for playing right through the year.

"The competition is growing, almost to the extent that it's difficult to manage," Tobin said in Gothenburg, after Sweden had whitewashed the United States 5-0 to take the trophy at the weekend.

But Newcombe said that he was strongly opposed to the changes being considered. "Best of three sets is too short for something as important as the Davis Cup and one service instead of two is a joke in my opinion. But a tie-break on every set, I don't have a problem with that," he said.

FOOTBALL

Harford lured by London calling

QUEENS Park Rangers are expected to make an official approach for Ray Harford, the West Bromwich Albion manager, today and the indications are that he will take up the offer to move to Loftus Road.

Harford's success in turning the Midlands club into surprise promotion-chasers on a limited budget has convinced Chris Wright, the Rangers chairman, that he is the ideal candidate to lift them out of the Nationwide League first division.

Wright delayed any approach until after QPR's game against Norwich City last night, but he is expected to act quickly in the hope of luring Harford to Loftus Road in time for the home game against Sunderland on Saturday.

West Bromwich will demand compensation for the loss of the former Blackburn Rovers manager, but the amount of money they receive will be considerably less than they might have expected because Harford has yet to sign a contract.

A clause insisting that he live within 25 miles of the

BY MATT DICKINSON

Midlands club — his family home is in north London — initially caused a delay in agreeing a deal and the contract has remained unsigned ever since, despite the efforts of Tony Hale, the West Bromwich chairman, to persuade him to put pen to paper.

Harford, who came close to being appointed at Sheffield Wednesday ahead of Ron Atkinson, is unlikely to turn down the chance to move to London and the opportunity to flex more financial muscle in his attempt to secure promotion to the FA Carling Premiership. While he has turned West Bromwich into a well-drilled team, there is far more scope at QPR, where the likes of John Spencer, Trevor Sinclair and Gavin Peacock have extensive Premiership experience.

Aston Villa must play their UEFA Cup third round, second-leg tie against Steaua Bucharest next week without their first-choice goalkeeper, Mark Bosnich.

The club has been told that the Australia international is needed by his country for the

Fifa-backed Confederation Cup in Saudi Arabia, which starts on December 12.

The summons means that Bosnich will miss the match at Villa Park on Tuesday as well as Villa's Premiership game with the leaders, Manchester United, at Old Trafford on December 15.

Terry Venables, the Australia coach, has also called Harry Kewell, of Leeds United, Stan Lazaridis, of West Ham United, Southampton's Robbie Slater, the Portsmouth pair, Craig Foster and John Aloisi, and Tony Vidmar, of Rangers.

Venables, in his role as Portsmouth chairman, has begun discussions with the first division club's financial advisers after it was revealed that players and staff were not paid their wages last month and that renovation work on the Fratton End stand had stopped.

Colleen Jordan, a club spokeswoman, said that the shortfall was because of money still owed from the transfers of Lee Bradbury to Manchester City (£3 million) and Dean Burton to Derby County (£1.5 million).



Harford, centre, has a brawl in what might prove to be his last match at West Bromwich, against Manchester City on Tuesday

Referee is punished over tackle on Irwin

SANDOR PUHL, the referee who failed to punish Paul Bosvelt, the Feyenoord midfielder, for an appalling tackle on Denis Irwin in the Champions' League match against Manchester United in Rotterdam last month, has been barred from taking charge of further European club matches this season (Rob Hughes writes).

This unprecedented action, effectively striking off a referee for negligence, came yesterday from the Uefa referees' committee after it studied reports of the blatant kick on Irwin. Feyenoord substituted Bosvelt while Irwin was treated for ligament damage that may keep him out until Christmas.

A Uefa statement said: "Sandor Puhl, who failed to inflict the appropriate sanction, will not be assigned any Uefa matches this season."

The European governing body fell short of punishing the perpetrator. However, Uefa's response is a brave one given the status of Puhl, who refereed the 1994 World Cup final, the 1996 European championship final and the World Cup play-off between Australia and Iran in Melbourne last Saturday.

Referee reports Dunford to FA

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

GEOFF DUNFORD, the vice-chairman of Bristol Rovers, is to be reported to the Football Association for making scathing remarks about Kevin Lynch, the referee, after the 3-0 defeat against Wigan Athletic in the Nationwide League second division match at Springfield Park on Tuesday night. Dunford was angered by the display of Lynch, who sent off five players — four of them from Rovers.

Lynch, 45, an area sales manager from Knaresborough, north Yorkshire, declined to discuss the game yesterday but is believed to have included Dunford's comments in his report to the FA. Dunford was unrepentant yesterday. "It's possible that we will be brought up on a disrepute charge and I would welcome that," he said. "I would be glad of any opportunity to put our case forward. The evening was reduced to a farce, the ref seemed to want to make a name for himself."

Rovers had David Pritchard, Andy Tillson, Josh Low and Jason Perry dismissed, while Wigan lost Graeme Jones. It is only the second time in the 109-history of the Football League that five players have been sent off in a senior match. Rovers also now share with Hereford United, the dubious distinction of the record number of players from one side to be ordered off in 90 minutes.

Ian Holloway, the Rovers player-manager, was also unhappy at Lynch's approach. "People pay money to watch football not referees," he said. "I've never known a night like it and don't ever want to see another. I'll fight the decisions any way I can."

Peter Willis, a spokesman for the Referees' Association, said: "Everyone is entitled to their opinions but I'm saddened when club officials make public statements, especially straight after a game. They have an avenue to follow if they are not satisfied."

Although it appears certain that the FA will act over Dunford's remarks, and will probably also take a dim view of the confrontation between Jones and Perry as they walked to the dressing-rooms, Rovers are unlikely to be punished as a club. The dismissals arose from separate incidents, not a mass brawl.

Of more concern to the FA, on a night when ten players were ordered off in the Nationwide League, were the scenes near the end of Luton Town's second division game against Gillingham at Kenilworth Road. All 22 players became involved in a fracas. Matthew Bryant, the Gillingham defender, was dismissed, and Bedfordshire police later interviewed Ify Omorua, the Gillingham striker, after it was alleged that he assaulted a spectator.

Korn steps down as chairman of Forest

IRVING KORN yesterday conceded defeat in his battle to stay as chairman of Nottingham Forest. Korn was last week asked to resign by the club's new owners, but initially said he would not go unless he was sacked.

At a routine meeting of the Forest board, however, he bowed to the new owners' request but will continue as a director. Korn had been chairman since October of last year and in a prepared statement said yesterday: "I took over the club at a very difficult time and sincerely believe I have served the club as well as any other chairman."

Meanwhile, Reg Dove and Bob Fairhall who, along with Korn are the only survivors from the board that decided to put the club up for sale more than a year ago, have retained their place on the Forest board.

Wayne Turner, Luton Town's former chief coach, walked out of Kenilworth Road after turning down alternative employment with the Nationwide League second division club, who last week demoted him from the position he had held for two years.

Lennie Lawrence, the Luton manager, under pressure after a poor run of form that has left his team unexpectedly near the bottom of the table, demoted Turner as chief coach but yesterday said that he was sorry to see him leave.

FA unlikely to gain extra Cup tickets

THE Football Association will lobby the world governing body, Fifa, in an attempt to gain more World Cup tickets for England supporters. However, Lancaster Gate officials were warned last night that they are unlikely to get a dispensation.

Under the rules of France 98, competing teams will each receive 20 per cent of the ticket allocation for any match. While the new Stade de France has a capacity of 80,000, and Marseille's Stade Velodrome room for more than 60,000, the Geoffroy Guichard Stadium in St Etienne holds only 36,000. That would allow England just 7,000 supporters.

The England Members Club has 27,000 members, Steve Double, the FA spokesman, said. "Since we qualified we've received 200 calls a day from people wanting tickets. The sad fact is that a lot of people are going to be disappointed."

However, Keith Cooper, a Fifa spokesman, said that there would be no leeway. "The strict rules are that every country will receive 20 per cent of the tickets available for their matches. Surely the Football Association does not want us to create security problems by taking tickets from here and there?"

One possible solution would be for matches involving England to be switched to bigger stadiums, an option laid down in the France 98 rulebook.

Sorry about the handwriting but we've got everything crossed for England today.



Good luck England in today's World Cup Finals Draw.

WWW.WC98.COM

THE TIMES THURSDAY DECEMBER 4 1997

Only a chiropodist could have complained

What with "docu-soaps" still all the rage, many viewers will have assumed — quite understandably — that *Arch People*, last night's Modern Times (BBC2) was going to be a witty-titled, fly-on-the-wall documentary exposing the world of chiropody — especially since the *New Yorker's* Bill Buford warned us in his *Letter From New York* on Radio 3 last month that Britons (unlike Americans) were renowned for the putrid state of their feet, and that Britain should brace itself for a revolution in foot hygiene.

But *Arch People* turned out to be a stylish, sweetly lyrical film about life under Britain's 4,500 railway arches. Educational, too. "People think that S&M is all about pain, about fear, about hurting people," explained Master B, a regular of the *Dungeon*, under the arches in Yaxham. "In fact, if done properly, it's about enjoyment, it's about sexuality and it's about nice things

and the nasty." So you see, sex is dirty, but only if you do it properly. But Master B shed no light on the eternal dilemma: is it more satisfying for a sadist to whip a masochist, or to refuse to whip them?

Master B uses his black office briefcase (leather, obviously) to carry his "mobile dungeon". It contains many items you might expect: rope, handcuffs, "large and small", a riding crop for the ladies. Oh yes, and an "Archie brush". For S&M with a DIY approach?

There seems to be pretty much nothing you can't do in a railway arch. Ian makes coffins, Richard and David, a couple of pianists, practise duets, repeating any bars drowned out by the 214 trundling overhead; in the City there's a railway arch where stockbrokers practise their golf swing; there is an American car wash; a mosque; junk shops; artist studios; and car mechanics. But no chiropodists. David Turnbull, the director, dug

up several captivating arch-dwellers, but I particularly enjoyed listening to Nicola and Stephen explain what they love about belonging to a posh gun club.

"It is thrilling to have something in your hand that can kill people," said Nicola. "But it's the same as with a Porsche or a crossbow: you have to behave responsibly with it." Of course you do. Stephen dismissed any Dunblane-style risk from gun clubs because members were well-to-do accountants, solicitors, that sort of thing: "Your average person who has a low income," he explained, "is not going to come in here and start shooting. He's more likely to be playing his Sega Megadrive at home." Bless your average person!

Almost as priceless was the scene in Antony Thomas's *Twins* (TV), when he asked two identical twins in America if they thought they had identical



thoughts. "Yes sir," replied one. "Yes sir," replied the other. Neither smiled. They didn't see any joke.

Scientist have used twins to investigate how much we owe to our heredity and how much to our environment. It is an officially dubious area, as Mengele showed in Auschwitz. Many scientists seem to think that it teaches us little that is worth knowing. Others think that it supports the idea that the

underclass is genetically programmed to stay at the bottom of society — or stay at home playing with their Sega Megadrives.

It's all still a mystery, which may explain why an award-winning film-maker such as Thomas (he made *Death of a Princess*) searched so restlessly for something that might lift *Twins* above the level of an entertaining peep show.

Thomas betrayed this unease when he began filming Reba and Lori Schappell of Pennsylvania, who are joined at the head, like a double-winged Sycamore seed. "When we first met this pair," said the narrator's voice, as the camera traced the contour of their shared forehead, "all of us had doubts about our right to remain here and film. Could Lori and Reba add anything to our understanding of twins beyond the vicarious appeal of the freak show?" Well, Lori and Reba couldn't

add very much, at it happened, but that didn't stop the camera from gawping at them as the two girls stared at the world in opposite directions. Ironically, they turned out to be the most individualistic of all the twins interviewed. Reba wants to make it as a country-and-western singer. Lori has her eyes on marriage. Full marks to both for their self-confidence, their inspiring zest for life, and for their honesty. Lori was particularly honest when talking about how sex with a future husband would pose no problems: she wasn't a virgin, anyway. But what was Thomas doing asking such questions in the first place?

David Attenborough began last night's *Wildlife Spectacular* (BBC1) by telling us that: "The world has changed dramatically around them, but they have changed very little." So I thought it was going to be a

documentary about Tory MPs. It wasn't. It was about *The Crocodile*, the world's most successful freshwater predator. As in last week's film of polar bears, there was dramatic footage of crocodiles swimming, taken from beneath the crocs, with the sun behind them. The BBC's Natural History Unit has obviously acquired a new underwater camera, which is fine by me, as long as they don't use it to film Hague, Redwood and Lilley when they are next bathing in Blackpool.

The photography is magical. Eyelids closing and opening like a camera lens; mating rituals (not much French kissing, as you might expect; and certainly no Arcting brushes); eggs popping out of the female like glistening balls of mozzarella. As for those teeth, there'll never be a better advert for regular flossing. Once again, chiropodists lost out: we never once saw the state of a croc's feet.

- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (44907)
 - 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (1) (49368)
 - 9.00 Good Living Moroccan recipes and a Christmas tree cake (1454742)
 - 9.25 Style Challenge (1440549)
 - 9.50 Kilroy (1) (2188388)
 - 10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (1958704)
 - 10.55 The Really Useful Show Bargains under £20 (9557278)
 - 11.35 Change That in Durham (3246029)
 - 12.00 News (1) (9697636)
 - 12.05 pm Call My Bluff With Peter Fiddick, Patrick Lifford, Joanna David and Rory Bremner (2971029)
 - 12.35 Give Us A Clue (5571617)
 - 1.00 News (1) and weather (42452)
 - 1.30 Regional News and weather (17713758)
 - 1.40 The Weather Show (8554617)
 - 1.45 Neighbours (1) (7295891)
 - 2.05 Guilty The owner's honeymoon is blighted (1) (1250181)
 - 2.55 Woman's Best of Blankety Blank (295452)
 - 3.30 Pingu (1) (8488907) 3.35 Playdays at the Patch Shop (1) (7002927) 3.35 The Silver Brumby (7900131) 4.30 Mr Wymie (1) (7914810) 4.35 Smart (1) (2889452) 5.00 Newsround (1) (5080470) 5.10 Aquila (1) (558075)
 - 5.35 Neighbours (1) (7225181)
 - 6.00 News (1) and weather (87)
 - 6.30 Regional News Magazine (839)
 - 7.00 Watchdog with Anne Robinson (1) (7258)
 - 7.30 EastEnders Cindy prepares for a long-awaited reunion with Lucy (1) (729)
 - 8.00 Animal Hospital A Yorkshire terrier is treated by vet Jeremy Stewart for a sore eye caused by a car ride (1) (5276)
 - 8.30 Holiday Reps Boss Wendy Jones arrives on Mallorca to discuss the girls' future (1) (7019)
 - 9.00 News (1) regional news and weather (8365)
 - 9.30 Men Behaving Badly Gary agrees to see a relationship counsellor (1) (22013)
 - 10.00 They Think It's All Over Sharon Davies and Phil Jupitus join Gary Lineker, Lee Hurst, David Gower and Rory McGrath (1) (83636)
 - 10.30 Clive Anderson All Talk The guests are John Goodman and John McEnroe (22384)
 - 11.00 Question Time The panel is MPs Ken Livingstone and Teresa Gordon, Heather Rabbatts, chief executive, Lambeth Council, and Melanie Phillips, an Observer columnist (1) (200297)
 - 12.05 am Silent Movie (1982) A mystery man accuses a Hollywood screenwriter of stealing his ideas for his Oscar-winning film. She begins to take notice when people around her are murdered. With Patricia Wettig, Mike Farrell and Ed Asner Directed by Lee Phillips (545551)
 - 12.10 Wales: 12.05am Social Action Week 1997 (9170853) 12.10 FILM: Silent Movie (5455414) 1.35-1.40 News (7597795)
 - 1.30 Weather (7598414)
 - 1.35 BBC News 24 (5172018)

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- BBC2**
- 6.00am Science: Venus Unveiled (55888)
 - 6.30 The Art of Breathing (10365) 7.00 See Hear Breakfast News (1) (343928)
 - 7.15 Teletubbies (1) (2660226) 7.40 The Perils of Penelope Pitstop (1) (8139487)
 - 8.05 Blue Peter (1) (1) (8215704) 8.30 Mosaic and Mosaic (2295937)
 - 8.35 Johnson and Friends (1) (9220755) 8.45 The Record (8145884) 9.10 Numbertime (6285723) 9.25 Megamaths, Last in series (1) (4321278) 9.45 Come Outside (5984907) 10.00 Teletubbies (1) (49407)
 - 10.30 Storytime (5190585) 10.45 Teaching Today (195810) 11.15 Zig Zag (9585655) 11.35 English File (314381)
 - 11.55 Lifeschool (3151907) 12.00pm Showcase (9699094)
 - 12.30 Working Lunch (52481)
 - 1.00 Joshua Jones (1) (50745346) 1.10 The History Hour from Kingston upon Thames: newspapers in research (2631278) 2.10 Going, Going, Gone (54807075) 2.40 News (1) 2.45 Westminster (5153723) 3.25 News (1) 3.30 The Village (81) 4.00 Ready Steady Cook (452) 4.30 Through the Keyhole (2888723) 4.55 Esther: Male Escorts (5274549) 5.30 Today's Day (988)
 - 6.00 World Cup Draw Live coverage from Marseille (18810)
 - 7.00 HIL, Miss or Maybe (464346)
 - 7.15 Building Sights, USA The actor John Malkovich sings the praises of his favourite building — New York's Chrysler Building (1) (1) (55029)
 - 7.30 Regional Programmes (365)
 - 8.00 Just One Chance Why British children are performing badly in arithmetic compared with their European counterparts (620) WALES: Roy Noble on Common Ground
 - 8.30 Top Gear Classic car auctions (1) (5665)
 - 9.00 Third Rock from the Sun Tommy realises life in the fast lane isn't for him during his driving test (1) (455162)
 - 9.25 Score Stories: Scorching the Earth is there really a greenhouse effect? (1) (452907)
 - 10.15 Expanding Pictures Performance artists John Carson and Donna Rothford collaborate with director Deborah May (1) (850013)
 - 10.28 Video Nation Shorts (462487)
 - 10.30 Newsnight (1) (563433)
 - 11.15 Late Review (98891)
 - 12.00 The Midnight Hour (81292)
 - 12.30am Learning Zone: Edeline Currie (7021673) 12.40 Leaders and Dictators (6533853) 1.30 Frederick the Great and Sarsa Sarsa (857928) 2.00 Hospitality and Catering (32747) 4.00 Teaching Film and Media (82398) 5.00 Teaching Training: Inside Europe (39414) 5.30 Windows on the World (52921)

SKY SPORTS 3

- 12.00pm Wrestling (8173810) 1.00 Fish TV (8173820) 2.00 Sports Illustrated (4736461) 2.30 The Golden Age of Motor Racing (8502255) 3.30 Sport USA (1) (1) (822951) 5.00 Wrestling (7473641) 5.30 Pool (2400638) 6.30 Best and Worst (2070629) 7.00 Light House (5003704) 8.00 Spanish Premier Liga (5003589) 9.00 Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook (9172658) 11.30 Close

EUROSPORT

- 7.00am World Cup Dream Team (17704) 8.00 World Cup (80704) 10.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 11.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 12.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 1.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 2.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 3.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 4.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 5.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 6.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 7.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 8.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 9.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 10.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 11.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 12.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 1.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 2.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 3.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 4.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 5.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 6.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 7.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 8.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 9.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 10.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 11.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 12.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 1.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 2.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 3.00 World Cup Legends (80704) 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